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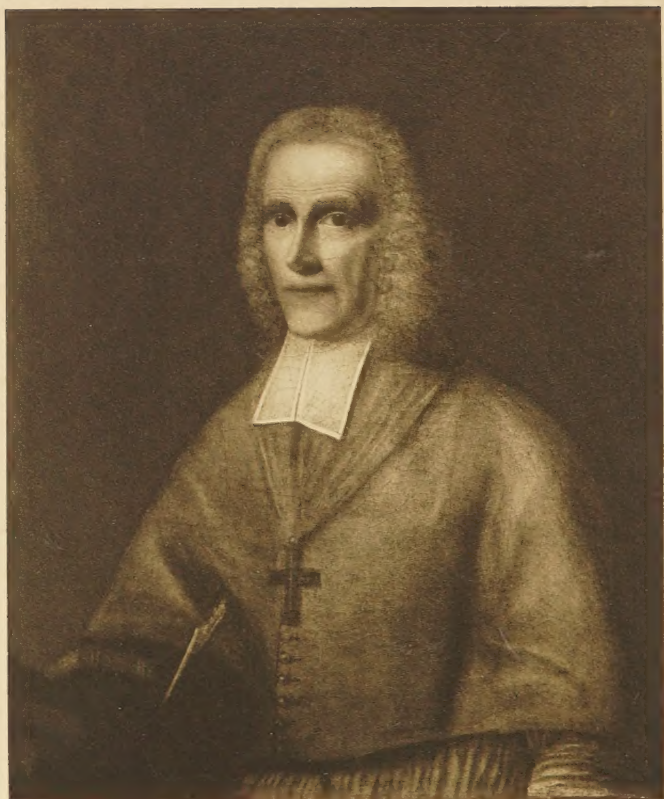
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# THE LIFE AND TIMES OF BISHOP CHALLONER

(1691-1781)

BY

EDWIN H. BURTON, D.D.

VICE-PRESIDENT OF ST. EDMUND'S COLLEGE, OLD HALL;

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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TO  
THE RIGHT REVEREND  
BERNARD WARD,  
PRESIDENT OF ST. EDMUND'S COLLEGE.

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## PREFACE.

THE lengthy Introduction to this book might, perhaps, have dispensed with any further Preface; but, had it done so, no opportunity would have been afforded me of acknowledging the generous help which has been freely rendered, and without which the work could not have been written. From the long list of names that follows it will be seen how numerous were the favours sought, how ungrudging the help afforded.

When, some twelve years ago, I wrote a short account of Bishop Challoner for the Biographical Series issued by the Catholic Truth Society, that pamphlet was compiled entirely from published sources of information, accessible to all, especially the biographies written by Challoner's contemporaries, Bishop Milner, the Rev. James Barnard and Charles Butler, K.C. But the meagre character of these showed how desirable it was that a thorough examination of the unpublished documents, relating to his life and times, should be made, and a search for new materials instituted.

The results of this examination and search are embodied in these volumes, though it has proved impossible to include within their limits the whole mass of material which has accumulated in my hands. This material has been drawn from very varied sources, among which the official papers of the Vicars Apostolic naturally are of chief importance.

In the first place, the archives of the London Vicariate were put at my disposal by His Eminence, the late

Cardinal Vaughan, whose gracious interest in the work has been continued by his successor, the present Archbishop of Westminster, the most Rev. Francis Bourne. Exceptional facilities were afforded me for examining and transcribing necessary papers, and this lengthy task was greatly facilitated by the courtesy extended to me by the late Father Stanton, and by Brother Vincent Hayles of the London Oratory. The Rev. Raymund Stanfield has, also, with unwearied kindness afforded most valuable assistance drawn from his close and intimate knowledge of the materials for Catholic History.

For the use of the archives relating to the Midland District, I am indebted to the Bishop of Birmingham and to Monsignor Parkinson, Rector of Oscott College, who allowed me every opportunity for studying these papers, both when I was a student at Oscott and since. In this connection I add with affectionate regard the name of the late Canon Greaney.

The northern archives, now at Ushaw College, were thrown open to me by the kindness of the late Dr. Wilkinson, Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle, and President of Ushaw. In dealing with these I am under many obligations to the Rev. Edwin Bonney, to my brother, the Rev. Harold Burton, and to the Rev. Thomas Dunne.

Though the archives of the Western District relating to this period all perished in the Gordon Riots, yet some points of interest were obtained from later papers belonging to that Vicariate, and grateful acknowledgments are owing to Dr. George Ambrose Burton, Bishop of Clifton, who has several times shown his interest in the work by making suggestions of great value.

For other papers or for information relating thereto sincere thanks are due to the Right Rev. Bishop Giles, Rector of the English College, Rome; to the Rev. Don Giovanni Lucchetti, one of the secretaries to the Congregation of Propaganda; to the Rectors of Ratcliffe



College, Blairs College and the Venerable English College at Valladolid; to the Jesuit Fathers at Stonyhurst and Farm Street, notably to the Rev. J. H. Pollen, S.J.; to Mr. J. B. Corney, who lent me for several weeks the valuable MS. *Mawhood Diary*; and to Mr. Joseph Gillow, ever ready to place at the service of others the results of his life-long studies in our Catholic literature.

It would be an endless task to thank by name the numerous correspondents in all parts of the country who have patiently answered letters of inquiry on the countless points of detail involved in work of this character. In this respect I find myself specially indebted to the Lord Mowbray and Stourton, the Very Rev. Canon Vere, the Rev. Dom Norbert Birt, O.S.B., the Rev. C. J. Bowen, the Rev. Cyril Evans, B.A., Mr. J. Franklin Jameson, Director of the Department of Historical Research at the Carnegie Institution of Washington, and Dame Mary Justina, O.S.B., of St. Scholastica's Abbey, Teignmouth.

For leave to reproduce original portraits as illustrations, grateful acknowledgments must be made to His Grace the Duke of Norfolk, the Lord Stafford, the Dowager Lady Petre, Duke Gandolfi, the Abbot of Downside, the Abbot of Douai, the President of St. Edmund's College, the President of St. Wilfrid's College, Oakamoor, the Rector of Blairs College, Mr. Stafford Jerningham, J.P., Mr. Riddell Blount, Mr. L. A. Barrett, and Mr. J. B. Corney. In the selection and preparation of the illustrations the advice and assistance of Mr. Emery Walker, F.S.A., have been of the greatest service.

I have also to express my thanks to the Right Rev. Abbot Bergh, O.S.B., who not only read the work as censor but who gave me the benefit of many useful comments; to the Rev. Edward Myers, M.A., for his constant aid, to the Rev. Augustine O'Leary for the trouble he took in photographing documents; to the Rev. John O'Brien, B.A., Librarian of St. Edmund's College, and

to those who have lightened the laborious task of transcribing and collating documents, especially Mr. Francis Sollom and Mr. Thomas Clarke.

This bare enumeration of names seems but an inadequate expression of gratitude, though it is the only one possible. And if this is so in the case of those who have given their aid in one way or another, it seems still more so with regard to those who have helped me not in one thing but in all, and who have given me the advantage of their advice and the support of their interest throughout,—Monsignor Ward of St. Edmund's College and my old master, Mr. Alfred Herbert, M.A.

It only remains to submit all that is here written to the judgment of the Church, and to declare in conformity with the decrees of Urban VIII. and other Popes that only human authority is here ascribed to the facts related concerning Bishop Challoner, and to the appellations indicating sanctity used in his regard, particularly to the epithet "Venerable" which has been popularly attributed to him both during his life-time and since his death.

ST. EDMUND'S COLLEGE,  
12th August, 1909.

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## INTRODUCTION.

IN the history of the Catholic Church in England there is a dark and depressing epoch, the duration of which can be clearly defined as lasting from the Revolution of 1688 to the Catholic Relief Acts which put an end to the penal laws at the close of the eighteenth century. There is no period of which less has been recorded. It forms the Dark Ages of our later history. The practice of the Catholic faith was proscribed by law and the Church was again in the catacombs. Yet this epoch, which has been so completely lost sight of, is the connecting link that joins our present history with that of the Church in the seventeenth century and the days of the martyrs, so that it is of vital interest and importance.

With this period the name of Bishop Challoner<sup>1</sup> is for ever identified. Born within three years of the Revolution, he lived to see the first Relief Act in 1778, and he died just ten years before the second, that of 1791, gave Catholics liberty of worship once more. For nearly half a century he was the leader and the foremost figure among English Catholics; and since his day no name has ever been held by them in greater veneration. Even now, when the details of his life are largely forgotten, his memory is held in reverence by many who know little or nothing of the work which he

<sup>1</sup> Though the bishop's name was sometimes spelt "Chaloner" and even "Chalenor," there is no doubt as to the right spelling. He himself always wrote it "Challoner".

did. That his name thus became a household word among our people is due to two causes. First, there was the memory of the pre-eminent personal holiness of his life ; and next, the fact that he was the writer of those works of devotion and instruction on which the succeeding generations of English Catholics were formed. For a long space of time his books were the most popular and widely used volumes in our literature ; and, even now, to many who know nothing of his work as a bishop, his name is familiar as the saintly author of the *Garden of the Soul*, the *Meditations*, and the *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*.

The century which has elapsed since his death has seen a great revival of the Catholic Church in this country. In 1791 the penal laws were abolished : in 1829 Emancipation was won : in 1850 the Hierarchy was restored. The large influx of Catholics from Ireland and numerous conversions in England have multiplied our numbers many times over ; and the land is covered with churches, schools, monasteries and convents. We have now a large and varied literature expressing the manifold activities of Catholicity. There is, above all, a vigorous spiritual life finding expression in the worthy celebration of the liturgy and public worship ; in a vast system of organised charity ; in countless associations for carrying on the religious and social work of the Church. Without minimising either our shortcomings or our difficulties, we may gladly recognise, when we compare the state of the Church in England to-day with its condition in the year of Bishop Challoner's death, that God has wrought His wonders in our midst and has given an increase beyond all hope.

But this vigorous and flourishing growth has not been called into being by the creative power of God,

without reference to everything that went before. Rather it is the ordered development of the Catholic life that preserved its hidden existence through the long winter of persecution. In the dark days was the seed sown which has given us so great a harvest. *Euntes ibant et flebant mittentes semina sua.* To understand fully our present condition, its problems and its responsibilities, the seed-time must be studied so that we may come to know our life-story as a whole. It may be that in the joy and exhilaration which accompanied the rapid growth of our "Second Spring" there was a tendency to forget the past in the stress and excitement of the present. Catholics who were exulting in their freshly won Emancipation, in their recently gained Hierarchy, and in the new possibilities of the work lying ready to their hands, may be excused if, in the onrush and vigour of their new life, they did not dwell much on the old, narrow and contracted existence, painfully endured by their fathers.<sup>1</sup> So little by little the dark days were forgotten.

Yet now that we have time to study our origins and earlier history, we realise of what paramount importance that old life was. In the first days of the Church there was but a handful of men hidden in an upper chamber to form the nucleus of the Kingdom of God,—one hundred and twenty persons gathered round the chosen twelve. In a little while there came a time when in one day "there were added" three thousand souls. But the three thousand were added to the twelve, and it is the previous history of the twelve that is of vital importance to us. So when the Providence of God

<sup>1</sup> See the Sermon preached by the Bishop of Clifton at the translation of the remains of Cardinal Wiseman and Cardinal Manning to Westminster Cathedral on 15th February, 1907; and Monsignor Ward's article "Catholics in the Eighteenth Century" in the *Dublin Review*, January, 1909.

sent large numbers of souls to swell the ranks of Catholics in this country, the new-comers found the little handful, who had been hidden, waiting ready to receive them. When the river of Catholic life was thus suddenly and unexpectedly increased by these new streams, it was well that the channel was already hollowed and prepared, lest the waters should have run waste before they could have carved out a channel for themselves.

No true estimate is possible of the great work accomplished by Cardinal Wiseman and the prelates of the restored Hierarchy unless we appreciate at its full value the work of the vicars apostolic, on which all the subsequent labours of the Hierarchy have been based. It was the vicars apostolic who planted that which archbishops and bishops have watered, and to which God has given the increase. It is this fact—not always perhaps held in adequate remembrance—which gives both interest and importance to their history. Yet we cannot be altogether surprised that they and their work have receded so much into the background. The circumstances of their age confined their activity within the narrowest limits, and their work was perforce of that kind which has little to show at the time of labour, and which has to wait long for its results. It was small wonder, then, that the lives of the old Catholics seemed lacking in interest and even deficient in enterprise to their more fortunate successors.

The chief characteristic of the eighteenth century in England from the point of view of the Catholic historian is its unproductiveness. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had witnessed the establishment abroad of numerous colleges and religious houses, both for men and women, which continued in foreign lands the work which was no longer possible in England. During



the short reign of James II., too, an organised form of episcopal government had been re-established, and England had been divided into four vicariates—the London, Northern, Midland and Western Districts—each under the care of a vicar apostolic in direct dependence on the Holy See. Thus there had been a certain amount of constructive work accomplished. But in the eighteenth century all that could be done was to preserve and maintain existing institutions ; and Catholics had to devote their whole energy to endurance rather than to positive achievement.

Having regard to this and to the narrowed character of their private lives, hedged in as they were on all sides by disabilities and restrictions, we can feel no surprise that the Catholics of those days tended to get into a groove. When at length Emancipation and full liberty were won, habits engendered by long custom could not be suddenly and readily adapted to the new state of affairs. Thus it happened that the converts of the middle nineteenth century were struck and oftentimes perplexed by what they considered the unprogressive and unduly conservative attitude of those whose adherence to the Faith was hereditary.

As the spiritual lives of these “ old-fashioned Catholics ”—as they were sometimes termed—had been largely moulded by the works of Bishop Challoner, and their clergy had been formed in his school of thought, he came to be regarded as the very type and representative of the Catholics of the penal times. This in itself was a true view, but, in so far as it identified him with a general attitude of passive and inert submission to circumstances, it does him less than justice. Perhaps even those who hold his memory in deserved veneration, and who would resent any depreciation of his life-work, would hardly in

the light of tradition regard him as a man of initiative or strenuous endeavour, and would be much more likely to honour him as one who in evil days was content to suffer in silence and in brave endurance. And yet the truth is that a careful study of his life reveals in him a man of remarkable and many-sided activity, ever alert in the cause of religion to supply what was lacking, to restore what had been forgotten, to develop what existed, and to seize eagerly on every opportunity of quickening and deepening Catholic life and endeavour.

It is surprising how much even in our present spiritual life we owe to him in one form or another. To him is due our version of the Bible, the popular edition of the *Imitation of Christ*, the present form of the "Penny Catechism" learned by all our children, to say nothing of the ever popular *Garden of the Soul*, that almost universal manual of prayers, *Think Well On't*, and the book of *Meditations*. It was he who restored to our Missals and Breviaries the English Supplement with the festivals of English Saints, who instituted the Clergy Conferences, who kept alive for us the memory of the English Martyrs. Of existing institutions, St. Edmund's College, Old Hall, was built up after the fall of Douay College on the foundation of the school he had established at Standon Lordship; St. Wilfrid's College, Oakamoor, was founded by him at Sedgley Park, and the venerable English Colleges of Valladolid and Lisbon owe him so much that they may with justice claim him as their second founder.

Besides all this, there was the work he did in supplying the needs of his own time. When books of instruction were needed he wrote them; if a controversy became necessary he undertook it. In turn he gave to his people not only prayer-books and meditation books,

but lives of the Saints, a Martyrology, a summary of Bible History, a short Church History, and translations of the chief works of St. Augustine, St. Francis of Sales and St. Teresa. All these labours were carried on, not only in addition to the ordinary work of a bishop, but under conditions often arduous and hampering; sometimes, indeed, under the stress of actual persecution. The story of Bishop Challoner's life, then, is very far from being a mere record of passive endurance, and there are many points where it throws a stream of light upon the practices and institutions of to-day.

He was not, indeed, a man of genius, or even of striking originality. By nature he was a staunch conservative, who loved to walk in the old paths. But he possessed marked intellectual ability and that strong practical sense which knows how to turn knowledge to daily use. His literary work, consisting as it does largely of adaptation and translation, shows him as concerned above all to provide that which was necessary or useful to the spiritual life of his people. With him, books were a means to his end, and he had no literary ambition. Each successive publication was designed to meet a definite want, and he was indifferent as to whether this was attained by a new book of his own composition, or by the refurbishing of some older work which had previously done good service in the cause.

The fact that all his efforts, literary and administrative, were directed for the benefit of others, and not for himself or his own advantage, brings us to another marked feature of his character, and one which, it must be confessed, does not render him an easy subject for biography. This was his absolute self-abnegation—the deliberate mortification and setting aside of self, which he regarded as one of the necessary conditions of the

spiritual life. Not only in his books, but even in his letters, we search in vain for anything that approaches self-revelation. In all the mass of his correspondence there are but a few accidental references to himself. Never does he deliberately tell us what he was doing or thinking at any given time. He will give his opinion on the business of the Church, or the spiritual concerns of single persons ; but of himself he will not speak. Hence even in his own biography his personality oftentimes may seem intangible and elusive. I am conscious that many of my chapters are largely concerned with external events, in which he only figures as a beneficent influence aloof, though ever present. This, rightly considered, is but an inevitable consequence of his other-worldliness ; another witness to the truth of the assertion made so constantly by those who knew him—that “ his conversation was ever in heaven ”.

It is this, too, which has surrounded his person with a strangely marked atmosphere of reverence. I have so far come under this influence that I have not ventured to do what the men who knew him would never do,—to weigh his actions in the scales of human judgment. There is only one instance, that I have met with in the course of a long and patient study of contemporary documents, in which the course he took was criticised in an adverse sense.<sup>1</sup> For the rest, he lived his life amid the heart-felt admiration of the men who knew him best ; and if I have not painted any shadows in my picture, it is because I could not find any in the portraits drawn of him from personal knowledge and at first hand. Human feeling is sometimes shown in the intimate discussion of weighty problems, but even this is always subordinated to his ruling passion,—the ob-

<sup>1</sup> This is in connection with the St. Omer difficulty : see chapter xxvi.

servance of what he understood to be the Will of God. For the rest he was thoroughly English in temperament ; sober and practical. He did not possess great imaginative or creative powers, and was content to make his appeal to reason and innate sense of duty. Thus the secret of the influence he exercised on others lay, not in force of eloquence, or the inspiriting leadership that moves men to enthusiasm, but in his own sanctity and earnestness.

The attitude of later generations towards him was the same as that of his contemporaries. He is always spoken of with a reverence akin to that with which we speak of Saints. Once again—and once only—is there an occasion on which words were written of him which might possibly be taken as implying some censure. These words—not offensive in themselves in any way—were written in a Catholic magazine, and they called forth the immediate and vehement deprecation of the first Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster.<sup>1</sup> If, therefore, this book seems to resolve itself into panegyric, I fear I have no apology to offer, seeing that in this I have but faithfully followed the Catholic tradition.

The three main sources of information about Bishop Challoner's life, which have been hitherto published, are the accounts written by three of his friends, and published while many who knew him intimately were still living. Accordingly they did not enter into particulars, or give descriptions, which by lapse of time have now become necessary, if only to afford a historical background for the bishop's figure. Nor, it must be added, are they entirely satisfactory in themselves, though when combined they yield a considerable mass of

<sup>1</sup> *Dublin Review*, No. 26, vol. xiii., November, 1842, in which Cardinal Wiseman commented on a statement in the *Rambler*.



information. Fortunately this information can now be supplemented by the help of the unpublished documents which have been preserved, and which have been freely used in these pages. Before, however, detailed mention is made of these, something must be said of the three published memoirs.

The first was written by one of Dr. Challoner's priests, the Rev. James Barnard, who had been appointed by him President of Lisbon College some years before. Mr. Barnard was a man much respected by his brother-priests, and he acted for many years as vicar-general to Dr. Challoner's successor, Bishop James Talbot. He had returned from Lisbon the year after the bishop's death, and at once applied himself to the task of writing his biography. His book was published by Coghlan in 1784 under the title, *The Life of the Venerable and Right Reverend Richard Challoner, D.D., Bishop of Debra, and V.A., collected from his writings, from authentick records, and from near twenty years' personal acquaintance with him.* Unfortunately the execution of the work does not fulfil the promise of the title. Mr. Barnard had, indeed, every opportunity for giving a vivid and intimate account of Dr. Challoner's life, but we must regretfully add that he sacrificed everything to his desire to be edifying and instructive. In his first chapter, twelve lines on Challoner's birth and reception into the Church are followed by nearly fourteen pages on the Marks of the Church; and this method is followed throughout the book. The result is a dreary and tiresome compilation of nearly three hundred pages, thirty of which would suffice to contain the actual information given. Yet it is ungracious to quarrel with what was in itself a well-meant tribute of affection, and we can forgive the author the

more readily because he has given us two or three personal descriptions of the bishop which we could ill afford to lose. But our disappointment remains that he who knew so much should have told us so little.

Next came the short but far more valuable life by Milner. That vigorous and rugged character had been completely captivated by Challoner's gentle sanctity, and he loved the bishop with a tenderness which is the more impressive, coming as it does from one who was usually so downright and blunt in expression. Bishop Challoner was his spiritual hero, and the pen, that could on occasion write so incisively and even bitterly, has composed a beautiful and sensitive tribute to his memory. "The more narrowly I searched into his conduct and his views," he wrote, "the less human, and the more divine they ever appeared to me; and in a variety of business in which I have known him concerned, I never saw him act in any other manner than I should expect to have seen a Francis of Sales act, or his patron a Vincent of Paul."<sup>1</sup>

Two of Milner's publications were devoted to Bishop Challoner. The first, which he published in 1782, was the funeral discourse which he had preached in his chapel at Winchester, on 14th January, 1781, two days after the bishop's death. This is now so rare, that it has seemed well to reprint it in full in an Appendix to this book.<sup>2</sup> Although the sermon is principally devoted to a sketch of the bishop's character, it contains some biographical details of value.

But it was not till many years later that he wrote his *Brief Account of the Life of the Late R. Rev. Richard Challoner, D.D., Bishop of Debra and Apostolical Vicar of the Southern District*, which was prefixed

<sup>1</sup> *Funeral Discourse*, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Appendix K.

to Coghlan's 1798 edition of the *Grounds of the Old Religion*. As this work is quoted so frequently in the following pages, it will be well to give here the author's own account of it.

"The writer, having been suddenly called upon to furnish a brief account of the late Bishop Challoner and of the most remarkable transactions, relating to English Catholics, that took place during his episcopacy, to be prefixed to a new edition of that prelate's favourite work of controversy, *The Grounds of the Old Religion*, feels himself obliged to have recourse to the shortness of his notice, to the imperfection of his library and memoirs, and to distance from the Metropolis, in excuse for the very imperfect manner in which he has performed this task, and for any mistakes, into which he may inadvertently have fallen. The materials which he has made use of on this occasion, are first the *viva voce* account of a person, still living in the city of Winchester, who passed several of her early years in company with Bishop Challoner's mother, and whose testimony is confirmed, as far as that speaks, by the epitaph on her gravestone in the Catholic cemetery of the said city. His second source of information is the Bishop's own publications with those of other persons, whose names will be seen. In the third place he has made use of certain manuscript notes, which have been put into his hands, and which appear to be derived from authentic and original sources. Fourthly, the writer has derived many anecdotes here related from respectable personages, who had long been in habits of intimacy with Bishop Challoner, in particular from the late Rev. Messrs. Bolton and Browne. Lastly, having himself been brought up, in his early years, almost under the eye of the deceased, attending his public sermons, and

frequenting his house for private instructions, having also, at a later period, exercised the sacred ministry under his directions, and assisted at his conferences, he is thereby enabled to state many particulars, that will occur below, from his own certain knowledge. It is proper here to mention that there is already in print and upon sale a *Life of Bishop Challoner*, which forms a considerable volume, by the Rev. James Barnard; the author, however, not happening to be possessed of this, and not even having leisure to procure it from London, is unable to say how far his own plan may interfere with that of the said work; he understands, however, in general, that the latter chiefly dwells on the virtue and pious sentiments of the deceased, without entering into much narration, as the author here endeavours to do. The same is also the chief subject of a Funeral Discourse on the death of Bishop Challoner, which the writer hastily drew up the day after that event took place, and which was soon after published."

Unfortunately the short memoir was written in haste which has left its mark in one or two chronological errors, notably with regard to the bishop's consecration which he antedates by a year. On the other hand he is better informed than Barnard on the details of the bishop's early life, and is the only writer who has hitherto given the correct date of Challoner's entrance as a student at Douay College.

The third account of Dr. Challoner was written by Milner's famous protagonist, Charles Butler, whose narrative is the most vivid of the three. As the other two biographies were written by priests, it is fortunate that the third should be by a layman; and though he was still but a young man at the date of Dr. Challoner's death, he was already a prominent London Catholic,

and so had frequent opportunities of meeting the bishop. He did not write his account till he was himself an old man, and it first appeared in the *Catholic Spectator* for 1824. Seven years later it was reprinted in the *Catholic Magazine* for December, 1831, and January, 1832, under the title *Biographical Account of the Right Reverend Doctor Challoner, Bishop of Debra, Vicar Apostolic over the English Catholics in the London District*. It is signed "S," but internal evidence shows without a doubt that it was Charles Butler's work. He had before him, when writing, the lives of Barnard and Milner,<sup>1</sup> and he follows them closely in the main outlines of the life, though adding several anecdotes and incidents which throw light on the bishop's character. He also indulges in long characteristic digressions, treating incidentally on "Universities" and "the Nature of a Pontifical College". His work remains the latest expression of the traditions about the bishop held by those who had known him.

Since the publication of Charles Butler's memoir no other original account has been written. All biographical notices of Dr. Challoner, inserted in dictionaries or prefixed to various editions of his works, are compilations from the three sources already described. The first new light upon his life was the publication by Mr. John B. Corney in the *Downside Review* (July, 1888) of an article entitled *Dr. Challoner and the Gordon Riots*, containing valuable extracts from the unpublished diary of his ancestor, Mr. Mawhood, the close personal friend of the bishop.

These were all the materials available, when, some

<sup>1</sup> It is a slight matter of personal interest that in writing this book I have been using the same copy of Milner's *Life of Challoner* which Charles Butler used in writing his account more than eighty years ago.



twelve years ago, led by an accidental inquiry to an interest in the subject, the writer compiled a short life of Bishop Challoner, which was published by the Catholic Truth Society in the *Biographical Series*. The investigation of original sources in connection with this, proved a most interesting task, and to it I have devoted as much time as was compatible with my duties. The work of discovering, transcribing and collating material has been long and arduous, but the results have fully justified the trouble. Nearly three hundred of the bishop's letters have been discovered in various places, as well as a large number of documents illustrating his times. Had all these letters and the documents directly relating to him been printed in this book another volume would have been required; but the most important are here given in full in these pages, even at the risk of unduly multiplying quotations. The number and character of these hitherto unpublished papers are such as to lead me to hope that this book, apart from its own merits or shortcomings, will be found valuable as throwing much new light on the dark places of our eighteenth century history.

In this search for original documents my first care was to trace the papers belonging to the vicars apostolic of the four districts into which England was then divided. Of these the Western District may be dismissed at once, because all the archives earlier in date than 1780 perished in the flames, when Bishop Walmesley's house at Bristol was burnt during the Gordon Riots. Many documents belonging to the Northern District, and a smaller collection of papers which relate to Bishop Hornyold's administration of the Midland District, are at Ushaw College. The bulk of the archives of the Midland District are kept at Oscott College, though

every possible facility for the use of these valuable collections has been allowed me by the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle and the Bishop of Birmingham, to whom my thanks have been already expressed. But important as these collections are, the most valuable papers are naturally to be found in the Westminster Archives, and some detailed explanation of these is necessary.

All papers earlier in date than the year 1700 have been bound in a series of large volumes, and indexed thoroughly through the care of the Fathers of the London Oratory, in whose charge the Westminster Archives were for many years. But when I first examined the papers later than 1700, they were roughly sorted out into packets, each of which embraced five years. Thus the only reference possible was to the particular packet in which any one paper happened to be. This arrangement had been made by the late Fathers Knox and Stanton, preparatory to binding these papers in similar style to the earlier archives. The death of Dr. Knox, however, stopped the progress of the work, and the papers remained in these packets until recently, when His Grace the Archbishop of Westminster, who takes a strong interest in the Diocesan Archives, and who has made suitable provision for their safe custody at Archbishop's House, entrusted them to the Rev. Raymond Stanfield, under whose skilled supervision they are to be bound and catalogued. But this will be the work of a very considerable time, so that I have allowed the references to the old packets in my footnotes to stand. Besides this general collection of papers, which includes original letters from the Congregation of Propaganda, and other official documents, as well as much correspondence, there are some separate collections which call for a few words of notice.

*Epistolae Variorum.*—These are fourteen volumes of original letters addressed to the Clergy Agents at Rome, the Rev. Laurence Mayes (1706-1749), and the Rev. Christopher Stonor (1749-1790). These are of the utmost importance, as they contain the confidential letters written by Bishop Challoner to his Agent, whose duty it was to communicate such portions of the letters as he should think fit to the Congregation of Propaganda. Among these papers are also letters from Douay and Paris, from which very full information about the doings and also the gossip of the day is to be gleaned. The Roman Agent wisely obtained his intelligence from many quarters, and in these volumes accounts of current events from the most diverse sources are gathered together in one.

*The Roman Agency Papers.*—This is a separate collection consisting of the Agent's own papers, copies of memorials to Propaganda or of his own Italian rendering of letters sent to him by the Vicars Apostolic from England, or by the President of Douay. Three volumes concern the agency of Mr. Mayes. A companion volume, containing Dr. Stonor's Agency Papers from 1749 to 1790, is at present in the Southwark Archives. It is specially valuable for the period of years beginning in 1767, when the *Epistolae Variorum* come to an end.

*Bishop Challoner's Letter-book.*—A small quarto book of 148 folios, in which the bishop wrote the first drafts of several letters—one hundred and twelve in all—between 1742 and 1778. It also contains some accounts. With this book are one or two small note-books and several loose sheets of memoranda.

The sources from which certain other materials have been obtained are sufficiently indicated in the Preface and notes. They are numerous, but it is too much to

suppose that they are exhaustive. Isolated letters, for instance, are certain to be lying hidden among the papers preserved in old Catholic family houses or in religious communities. But it is hoped that everything which is of material importance has now been brought to light, and that any future discoveries will only serve to confirm the conclusions arrived at after careful study of the material now collected. It may be that at some future time the Catholic Record Society will be able to issue a full collection of Bishop Challoner's letters and the other documents relating to his career. It would be a work of much value to future historians : but such materials, if reprinted in these volumes, would not have forwarded the purpose with which this book has been written. This was simply to set forth before English Catholics more fully and thoroughly than has yet been done the life-story of a great servant of God, upon whose foundations they have built, and whose name they have so long and so loyally venerated.

# THE LIFE AND TIMES OF BISHOP CHALLONER.

## CHAPTER I.

### CHILDHOOD AT LEWES, FIRLE AND WARKWORTH.

1691-1705.

THOUGH only the barest facts about Bishop Challoner's origin have been preserved, they are enough to show that the beginning of his life did not in any way foreshadow his future career. He was the only son of parents belonging to the trading-class in the county-town of Lewes, where he was born on St. Michael's Day, 29th September, 1691.

Of his father, Richard Challoner, we only know that he was a wine-cooper by trade and "a rigid Dissenter" by creed. In his youth he had doubtless mixed much with men who had lived through the Civil War and Commonwealth, and whose Puritanism had descended, little abated, to the next generation. Had he lived, his son, whom he had caused to be baptised by a minister of his own persuasion, would in all probability have been brought up in the same stern school. But he died while the boy was still very young, and as he appears to have depended for his living on his daily toil his widow was left at his death totally unprovided for.

Mrs. Challoner, whose maiden name was Grace Willard and who like her husband was a native of Sussex, was only twenty-two years of age when her son was born, so that she was still quite young when, owing to the loss of her husband, she was left to face the world and seek a living for herself and her boy. She was fortunate in finding a home for both at Firle, only two or three miles from Lewes, in the house of Sir



John Gage with whom she took service. Sir John was the head of a noted Catholic family, a fact which would make it not impossible that Mrs. Challoner was herself a Catholic. But there is uncertainty upon this point, and Dr. Challoner's first biographers had very little information about his early life. Barnard, who knew him intimately in after-life, states that his parents were both Protestants; whereas Milner, who as a young priest was a devoted disciple of the bishop in his old age, says that "it does not appear whether his mother was originally a Catholic or not". Long years afterwards, when Dr. Challoner was elected bishop, a dispensation was necessary on the ground of his being a convert. The petition for this dispensation, which was probably drafted on information supplied by himself, states that "his father lived and died in the Anglican heresy and Richard Challoner himself until he was about thirteen years old had been brought up in that sect". If this statement is correct it would seem that his mother's conversion or reconciliation to the Church must have taken place as late as 1703 or 1704; that is at the same time as her little son was made a Catholic.

It is quite probable that the Catholic surroundings of Firle were the cause of Grace Challoner's conversion, for in such a house she would have every opportunity of becoming acquainted with Catholic teaching and practice. The history of the Gage family was one of fidelity to the ancient faith and loyalty to the exiled Stuart family. They had owned their estate at Firle since the days of Henry VI., when William Gage of Firle married Agnes Bolney, a connection of William of Wykeham. Through all changes of religion the Gages had always been staunch Catholics. Thus in the time of Queen Mary we find Sir John Gage acting as Lieutenant of the Tower of London and incidentally in this capacity superintending the execution of Lady Jane Grey; while in the next reign one of his grandsons was beheaded for aiding the cause of Mary Queen of Scots; and another, though ultimately reprieved, was sentenced to death for harbouring the martyr George Beesly. During the Civil War the family had espoused the side of the Royalists, giving to the King's party the chivalrous Governor of Oxford, Colonel Sir Henry Gage, who lived as a good Catholic with another future martyr, Ven. Peter Wright, S.J.,



for his chaplain, and who died in the field, shot through the heart while attempting to destroy Culham Bridge near Abingdon, his praise as soldier, courtier and diplomatist being recorded by Clarendon in his *History of the Rebellion*.

Doubtless Mrs. Challoner's little son in such a household would pick up many stories and traditions illustrating this inherited devotion to God and the King,<sup>1</sup> and would unconsciously acquire the Jacobite principles, of which there are traces in his after-life. At that very time there were relatives of the family living at St. Germain's, of whom he would have heard, thus learning of the exiled Catholic King. It is possible too that he may have heard of that Dr. Gage, who but a few years before had been president of the English College at Douay, where so much of his own future life was to be spent. We do not know how long Mrs. Challoner and the boy remained at Firle, but probably they were there only a short period, as some time before 1704 she was in service, apparently as housekeeper, in another well-known Catholic household, that of Mr. Holman of Warkworth, in Northamptonshire.

Warkworth Hill, at that time crowned by its castle, rises some two miles east of the old town of Banbury. The castle has long since disappeared, but a mute witness to its site still remains in the causeway of stones leading thither from Banbury Bridge, which local tradition declares was made for the use of the "Papists" who frequented the muddy bye-lanes that led to Warkworth. Very numerous were these Papists that so frequently made their way to the castle, for it was one of those English country homes where the Faith was preserved throughout the trials of the seventeenth century. These mansions were generally the seat of some family, impoverished by the long struggle of adhering to the ancient religion, but able, even in their decay, to do much towards helping other Catholics and to offer a hidden shelter where Mass could be said and the Sacraments administered. In such houses a priest was always to be found, who, in spite of the law, was ready to give his services

<sup>1</sup> A few years later and this record of staunch devotion was broken by the apostasy of the seventh baronet, who as a reward for simultaneously abandoning the Catholic faith and the Stuart cause was made a viscount, and busied himself in Parliament in opposition to Catholic interests. Tradition, however, says that this first Lord Gage repented on his death-bed, and sent for a Catholic priest.

to those who came in cautious secrecy for his help. Travelling priests could count on a place of rest and if necessary of concealment: while there was a constant coming and going of Catholics in want of either spiritual or temporal aid. Local magistrates, like other Protestant neighbours, were often friendly, and though they could be dangerous if they wished, in many cases they made a point of not seeing more than they were obliged to, and of leaving the "Papists" unmolested. Such country spots, rather than the towns, were the strongholds of Catholicity during the persecution, and Warkworth was a favourable instance of its kind.

George Holman, the Lord of Warkworth, did not represent, it is true, one of the old Catholic families: he was a convert who had inherited the estate in 1669 from his father, Philip Holman, formerly a scrivener in London who had bought Warkworth in the early years of Charles I. Anthony à Wood describes George Holman as a "melancholy and bigoted convert," but under this unsympathetic description it is easy to recognise a grave, zealous man who had suffered for his faith more than lost civil rights and curtailed liberty. The memory of a great tragedy hung over the house, for his wife was the daughter of the martyred Viscount Stafford. Lady Anastasia was deeply attached to her father, whose execution in consequence of the plots and intrigues of Titus Oates, though rightly regarded by Catholics as martyrdom, was none the less a public and shameful death.

George Holman died in 1698, so that Mrs. Challoner and her son found on their coming that Warkworth had passed under the rule of the widowed Lady Anastasia. Her five surviving children were quite young, the heir to the estates, William Holman, being only ten years old at the time of his father's death.

In this retired and stately English home Richard Challoner passed from childhood to boyhood. Here the impressions which he had gained at Firlie were to be deepened by a repeated experience of the same kind, while here he met the master whose influence was to stamp his entire career. The chaplain at Warkworth was the saintly John Gother, who undertook the boy's first education, and left the impress of his own strong character on his whole after-life.



WARKWORTH MANOR HOUSE.



It was not without significance in his education, too, that his life at this time was set in a scene of beauty, which in itself must have been a powerful if unrecognised force in his training. The castle consisting of a central block flanked on either side by a massive semi-circular wing crowned the brow of the hill from which terraces and gardens gradually sloped down to the beautiful valley of the Cherwell, where lay the ring of farms encircling the estate. Behind the house was the little Church of Warkworth, where so many Holmans lie buried, while in front, across the broad valley, the wooded slopes of the western bank of the river close in the richly coloured picture, and in the south the Oxfordshire range of the Cotswold Hills fades into the distance.

In these parts the current of Catholic life, though hidden, was strong. Within easy distance of Warkworth were the Catholic mansions of Purston, Tusmore, North Aston and Kiddington, each being at one time or another a centre of activity like to Warkworth. It seems certain that large numbers of distressed persons must have found their way to this corner of Northamptonshire for relief. The Holmans were well known for their open-hearted liberality to their fellow-Catholics. For more than a century their house continued to be an open refuge. Those who had fallen into poverty were pensioned, orphans were provided for, and boys were assisted to study for the priesthood. Among this latter class was Challoner himself, but before we pass to his school-days we must give some account of the master who first put him in the way of devoting his life to the service of God in the priesthood.

John Gother was one of the leading priests of his age, and his remarkable personality impressed itself strongly on his contemporaries, for they have left us fuller descriptions of the man and his work than the records of those times usually afford us. Small, almost puny in stature; feeble and insignificant in person, and redeemed from ugliness only by the piercing dark eyes through which the keen soul flashed, Gother stands before us as one of the spiritual forces of his day,—a man of piety and ability, urged by his apostolic spirit to an activity that knew no rest even amid constant physical suffering.

Bold and uncompromising as are his writings, his character



was retiring, so that though he was ever ready to come forward when called on, he led by preference a hidden life of labour and suffering, reaching innumerable more souls by his spiritual books than he could have done through personal intercourse. So little is known of his life that we do not know when or how he became a Catholic, but he was still young when we find him studying for the priesthood at the English College at Lisbon, whither he had been sent by the kindness of a Catholic relative. When at length he was ordained priest his talents justified his appointment as prefect of studies. As priest he fulfilled the promise of his student days, his prudence and sagacity being the characteristics that seem to have impressed those who knew him while he was engaged in teaching at Lisbon. But the warmer qualities that underlay his grave regularity appeared when he was sent back to England in 1682. He flung himself with ardour into the work of the mission: his love for children and the poor lending strength to his weakness. Scarcely any particulars have been preserved of his mission life in London, except the fact that "Mr. Lovell," as he was called during the times when a Catholic priest dare not go by his own name, was found more often in cellars and garrets than in the houses of the wealthier Catholics.

The accession of James II. in 1685, arousing as it did the hopes of Catholics and fears of Protestants—alike equally groundless—was the signal for immediate activity amid Anglican divines and pamphleteers.

Catholic writers such as John Serjeant were not wanting to the defence of their principles, but while they for the most part answered particular attacks on Catholic faith and practice, Gother put out a general reply which refuted at one blow the most common misrepresentations. It was his first and best-known work of controversy. The title was *A Papist Misrepresented and Represented: or a Twofold Character of Popery*. His plan was to adopt two parallel columns, "The one expressing a Papist in those very colours as he is painted in the imagination of the Vulgar, Foul, Black and Anti-christian; with the chief articles of his imagined belief and reputed principles of his profession: the other representing a Papist whose faith and exercise of his religion is according to the direction and command of his Church" (Introd.).



The book achieved an instantaneous success, called forth several replies, and has since run through nearly forty editions. A long and complicated controversy ensued during which Gother won a foremost place among Catholic apologists. His wit was keen, his learning wide, and his style had succeeded in winning the admiration of the great critic of the day, the poet Dryden.

At this time he joined Andrew Giffard and Christopher Tootell, uncle of Hugh Tootell who is better known as Dodd the historian, in opening a Catholic chapel in London. They took advantage of the favourable times to engage for this purpose Fishmongers' Hall in Lime Street, but after a time they were displaced and succeeded by Jesuits under circumstances which led to much embittered feeling.<sup>1</sup>

With the fall of James II. the transient gleam of prosperity passed away; chapels and schools were closed; the four vicars apostolic fled or were imprisoned; and Gother had already left London to become chaplain to Mr. Holman at Warkworth. The change in his outward manner of life must have been great, but the spirit of his labours remained the same. He impressed the small Catholic congregation at Warkworth in the same way as he had done the larger world in London. More than a century after his death, Charles Butler, writing of Warkworth, which, being near the scenes of his own boyhood, was well known to him, says, "The writer of these pages well recollects the respect with which its Catholic inhabitants always spoke of Mr. Gother, of his incessant application, his unbroken patience, his exact performance of missionary duty and his exemplary piety".

This was the master from whom the young Richard Challoner learnt the faith and practice of the Catholic Church and whose memory he regarded throughout his life with affectionate reverence. There was indeed much in common between these two; the same gentleness, steadfast patience and humility, coupled with the same quick perception and ready sympathy.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Papers and letters relative to this transaction exist both in the Westminster Archives and at Ushaw. For a summary see Gillow, *Bibl. Dict. Eng. Cath.*, ii., 453, s.v. Giffard, Andrew.

<sup>2</sup> This similarity was remarked and gracefully expressed by the French priest who wrote the Life of Gother in Migne's *Catéchismes*: "Associer ces

At length in 1704 master and pupil had to part, for Gother had been appointed president of Lisbon College in place of the aged Matthias Watkinson who was no longer equal to the duties of that office.<sup>1</sup> At the same time his name had been sent to Rome by the vicars apostolic as one of those who were considered suitable as a successor to Bishop Ellis who was about to resign the Western District. Yet the saintly priest was to become neither president nor bishop, for he died at sea on his way to Lisbon.<sup>2</sup>

Before he started on his journey, however, he had determined Challoner's future by arranging for the boy to be sent to Douay to be educated for the priesthood. This fact has led some of Dr. Challoner's biographers astray as to the year in which he went to Douay, for knowing that he was recommended by Mr. Gother, they assumed that he would have entered the college before the latter died. Thus Barnard says the boy arrived at Douay on the 31st of July, 1704, although he does not find his name in the class-lists until the following year. Milner, who shows himself better informed than Barnard on the facts of the bishop's early life, gives the correct date, 1705, but Charles Butler followed Barnard and their joint authority has misled most recent writers.<sup>3</sup>

Contemporary records from Douay itself make it clear in-

deux hommes, c'est faire l'éloge du maître et du disciple : du maître qui avait conquis à Jésus Christ et irrévocablement fixé sous ses étendards un homme aussi éminent que Challoner; du disciple qui par reconnaissance, s'efforça pendant toute sa vie de retracer les vertus dont son maître fut toujours un modèle accompli". (Migne, *Catéchismes*, vol. ii., 905, "Vie de Goter.")

<sup>1</sup> Though this fact has been stated by Milner in his *Life of Challoner* it does not seem to be generally known, and it is not mentioned in Canon Croft's *Historical Account of Lisbon College* in which he reprinted Dr. Kirk's earlier account. Yet among the Kirk papers at Oscott (*Coll. Ang.-Cath.*, iii., 829) there is a letter written by the Rev. James Buckley of Lisbon to Dr. Kirk himself in answer to enquiries about Mr. Gother (6th Nov., 1813) in which he says: "All that is known here by tradition is that coming hither to govern this College he died at sea".

<sup>2</sup> His sanctity so impressed the captain of the vessel, who was an Italian, that he refused to bury the body at sea, but carried it to Lisbon, where it was interred in front of the altar dedicated to St. Thomas of Canterbury, in the chapel of the English College.

<sup>3</sup> Thus Mazière Brady's *Annals of the Catholic Hierarchy*, Gillow's *Bibliographical Dictionary of English Catholics*, the *Dictionary of National Biography* and most of the short biographical notices of the bishop, including my own sketch written for the Biographical Series of the Catholic Truth Society, are misinformed as to this date.



LADY ANASTASIA HOLMAN.



deed that Gother did recommend the boy for a "burse," as an ecclesiastical scholarship is called ; but matters took time to arrange and his death occurred before all was settled. Lady Anastasia, in her kindness, herself took up the case for the lad, and was successful in persuading Bishop Giffard to place him on one of Bishop Leyburn's foundations.<sup>1</sup>

By the time this was all arranged the summer of 1705 had come and it was not till the end of July that the boy left England for Douay. His arrival is thus recorded by Dr. Dicconson, then a professor at Douay, in his diary :—

"July 29, 1705, Wednesday. This morning came to ye Colledge . . . Rich. Chaloner, son to ye late Rich. Chaloner who lived at [*blank in MS.*] in Sussex. Ye sayed Chaloner is recommended by ye late Mr. Gother and ye Lady Anastasia Holman and put on one of Bp. Leyburn's funds."

In this way Challoner began his school life, and the parting between him and his mother was the end of their companionship and of his own home life. She lived indeed for many years afterwards, but he remained abroad for more than a quarter of a century, and so mother and son met only on very rare occasions. In any case, with school so far away, holidays were not easy to arrange, and both must have felt that their parting was to be a long one. For the boy it was the easier, by reason of the very excitement and novelty of his life for the next few days. There was the coach-journey to London, to distract his attention, with the brief glimpse of that city, so strange to the country boy ; then came another long drive to Dover, the delight of his first sight of the sea, tempered by the inconveniences of the passage to Calais, and lastly more coaching along the straight roads and through the flat country of French Flanders. But his journey came to an end at length, and on the Wednesday morning of 29th July his eyes rested for the first time on the ramparts and towers of the old university town where he was to spend the next twenty-five years of his life.

<sup>1</sup> Bishop John Leyburn, who was Vicar Apostolic of England from 1685 to 1687 and then Vicar Apostolic of the London District till his death on 20th June, 1702, bequeathed to Douay College the sum of £1,000 as a fund for the education of students for the priesthood.



## CHAPTER II.

### SCHOOL-DAYS AT DOUAY.

1705-1710.

THE English College at Douay ever possessed in a marked degree the faculty, exercised more or less by every school, of impressing a certain definite stamp on those educated within its walls. The influences that unconsciously affect a boy, his beliefs, his thoughts, his moral code, his outlook on life, leave their mark on all his after-life in that indefinable tone which reveals the particular system or even place of education in which a man has been reared.

If, as everyday observation shows, the difference between men trained in different English schools is so marked, the strength and individuality of the Douay spirit will be understood and accounted for when the peculiar circumstances of the English College are recalled to mind.

Boys of the oldest English families, Howards, Talbots, and many others, unable to take their proper place at Eton, Winchester, Westminster, or other of the great English schools without denying their faith, found themselves hurried across the sea, surreptitiously and not without many perils, to find an English school in a foreign town. There they spent their boyhood, only returning home when their education was complete. Side by side with these was the more numerous class who found at Douay not only their general education, but also the direct training for the priesthood to which their lives were devoted.

Nor was this isolation confined to the early years of education. When the Douay boys grew up and returned to England they found themselves condemned to a life cut off from nearly all the interests of their countrymen. There was no career before them in army or navy, Parliament or law-court ;

very little chance of distinction in letters or art. The political disabilities led to a social ostracism so severe that nothing short of commanding genius of the first order could have broken through it. Whether actively persecuted or barely tolerated, Catholics of all ranks were outcasts from the national life and came to accept the position. The richer boys succeeded their fathers as country squires; others made homes and businesses in the towns; while the priests were scattered up and down the country doing their duty as best they might. Priests and laymen, rich and poor alike, found their everyday life so hampered and restricted by reason of their religion that they were in no danger of becoming indifferent to their faith, which by reason of their very sacrifices became the dearest thing in their narrowed lives. Looking back on their boyhood the old English College was associated not only with their school-days but with their faith itself. Thus through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there grew up an ever-deepening love and veneration for the English college and for the very name of Douay.

Though Challoner was only fourteen years old when he arrived at the gates of the college he was not too young to realise in some measure the spirit and traditions of his new home. One hundred and thirty-six years before, Cardinal Allen had founded the college, being led to choose this town rather than any other for the purpose because of the large number of Oxford men who, forced to leave their chairs and fellowships at Oxford owing to the change of religion, had crossed the seas to seek fresh positions in the new University of Douay. Some of these had come to live in the new college, bringing the Oxford traditions and scholarship with them. Gregory Martin, Thomas Stapleton and Richard Bristow had lived, studied and taught there. And—proudest memory of all—no less than one hundred and sixty of those whom the college had prepared for the labours of the English mission had crowned their priestly life with martyrdom.

The building which Challoner entered was not Allen's original house, but was the college which Dr. Worthington, third president, had erected about the year 1603. Though it lacked the historical associations with Allen, his first companions, and the company of Elizabethan and Jacobean martyrs which had

hallowed the earlier building, it had during the century of its existence gathered memories of its own. Many of the later martyrs had lived in its rooms and prayed within its chapel-walls, and traditions about them were yet fresh. Scarcely a quarter of a century had elapsed since the last martyr had won his crown in England. This was the Ven. Oliver Plunket, Archbishop of Armagh, who was executed in 1681. The last of the Douay martyrs, the Ven. Thomas Thwing, had suffered but one year previously. Some of the priests living at Douay in 1705 would have known this martyr personally.

As a matter of fact with the last of the martyrdoms the first part of the history of Douay College may be said to have closed. There was to be a second part to the history,—another century of strenuous activity and indispensable service to the English mission, when under somewhat changed conditions the college still proved equal to its work. In this period of its history the boy who entered the college on the 29th of July, 1705, was to take no inconsiderable share, but those days were yet to come and the college was passing through a transition stage of depression and reduced vigour.

It must be borne in mind that from the early days of Elizabeth to the Restoration, Catholics had never lost the hope that events might place a Catholic sovereign on the throne and that all England might be brought back to the faith once more. They had seen their hopes fulfilled on the accession of James II., but his three years' reign had proved a complete disenchantment. After his fall there was still hope of his restoration; even after his death there was hope for his son; but never after 1688 was it possible to believe that England would return to the Church by means of a Catholic sovereign. It was then that Catholics first realised that the Church had lost the English people, and in the discouragement of this knowledge they fell into a sort of lethargy and their numbers dwindled visibly. This depression in England reacted on the colleges abroad. At Douay the number of students diminished and financial difficulties arose. The very fabric of the college was falling to pieces with old age and was hardly weatherproof.

Dr. Edward Paston, who had succeeded Dr. James Smith as president in 1688, was hampered throughout his presidency by this melancholy state of things. He was a Norfolk man of

good family, connected with the Earls of Yarmouth, and he had himself been educated entirely at the English College. After a brilliant course, he took his degree of doctor in theology in the University of Douay, a distinction which comparatively few Englishmen achieved there.

The state of things in the house was far from satisfactory, but he set himself with dogged determination to surmount the difficulties. In doing this he made many enemies, who for many years attacked his method of governing. Replying to some of these criticisms he himself wrote :—

“When I came first to this office the defects of order, discipline, piety & true ecclesiasticall spiritt etc. were so very great y<sup>t</sup> it was not possible to remedy them in a short time. I therefore, not being willing to run too fast nor undertake too much at once, have proceeded by degrees, weighing every part of my reformation with long and mature consultations and deliberations after which a thing being once resolved on & published I never went back but stuck to it.”<sup>1</sup>

His admiration for the Seminaries established in France by St. Vincent of Paul and M. Olier had led him on his first appointment to attempt the introduction of their system at Douay ; but this project met with opposition on all sides and the president was accused of rashness and imprudence. The only practical results of his design was the intervention of the Cardinal Protector, Philip Howard of Norfolk, who having examined the matter at Dr. Paston's desire, issued revised and enlarged Constitutions of the English College, in 1690, which though they developed the original Constitutions of Clement VIII. were certainly not Sulpician. Dr. Paston appears to have been satisfied with the result of his action, but the confidence of the English clergy in him had been weakened and he lost support which he never regained. These Constitutions are important for our purpose, as they are an authentic source of information as to the manner in which the college was conducted during the whole of Dr. Paston's presidency and indeed until the French Revolution.

For the rest, we may suppose that if little Richard Challoner on his arrival had a personal interview with the president at all, he would have found himself in the presence of a very

<sup>1</sup> Ushaw Archives.

grave and formal gentleman, for it was part of Dr. Paston's system to maintain his authority by a distant manner. Dodd the historian, who knew him well, tells us that "his cheerful temper made him a very desirable person: but his latter days being spent in the education of youth he seldom found a proper time to be agreeable in that way, apprehending that he might lose his authority by unseasonable familiarities". His enemies, indeed, went farther than this and accused him of being stern and imperious in his manner. He replied to this charge in the document which we have already quoted:—

"I moreover, finding that my orders in the beginning were slighted, neglected and contemned, was forced to use strong expressions in the imposing of my orders such as were proper to signify a firmnesse of resolution to see them observed. . . . I must confesse that in speaking to particular persons the frequent oppositions, contradictions and contempt that my orders mett with, forced me sometimes to break out into harsh words which proceeded either from a natural defect or a desire of awakening persons otherwise insensible and persuading them I was in earnest."

This is an ample admission, yet his professors thought that he had wronged himself in confessing so much. He adds that they told him "that a great while agoe for a time my expressions were very sharp, but being admonished thereof they have since observed in me a very great moderation and condescendance".

That under this somewhat austere demeanour there lay a devout and kindly nature, Dodd bears witness, adding that the president's natural abilities and his learning were alike greater than his humility would allow to appear. Such was the man at the head of the English College when Challoner first entered it; but it is not likely that so young a boy saw much of the president except at a distance.

The Constitutions of 1689 have been mentioned as affording us insight into Douay life at this period. A still more vivid picture is given us in the circumstantial account written under curious circumstances by Dodd. This well-known author had every reason to speak with knowledge, for he was a Douay man himself, having entered the college in 1688 and remained there till 1693.



The circumstances under which this strange account was written must first be recalled. In 1713 he wrote and published a short work of thirty-six pages which he called *The History of the English College at Doway from its first foundation in 1568 to the present Time*; but which was really an attack upon the Jesuits. Indeed its chief opponent described it as "a rhapsody of indigested matter thrown together on purpose to cast dirt at the Jesuits". As he wished the work to be published and read in England he assigned the authorship to "R. C. Chaplain to an English Regiment that march'd in upon its surrendering to the Allies". This refers to the capture of Douay by the allied troops of England and Holland in 1710. This siege of Douay was so recent that the book was well calculated to interest the English public.

It was promptly answered and many of its statements challenged, but no one seems at first to have suspected that this pretended Protestant chaplain was in reality a Catholic priest. The controversy as to the chaplain's history does not, however, extend to his description of the college, its constitution and discipline. He described what he knew well, and his sketch affords us vivid glimpses into the college, and will be of the greatest use in reconstructing Challoner's school-life.

There is only one picture extant of the English College as it existed until it was rebuilt by Dr. Witham in the early eighteenth century. This is dated 1627, and shows us a two-storied quadrangular building with dormer windows in the roof indicating what was probably a cramped third floor. At the four inner corners of the quadrangle are four short towers with cone-shaped roofs. The chapel continues the frontage to the right, and at the back are gardens and outbuildings. Those who know the existing building, now used as a barracks, will see that Dr. Witham rebuilt the front of the college exactly on its original site, though his building was of ampler proportions; but he only rebuilt the front and sides of the quadrangle, leaving the site at the back to be converted into gardens.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is not very clear how much Dr. Witham rebuilt besides the front and the chapel. He was still collecting funds at the time of his death, and the work of rebuilding the rest of the college including at least a portion of one wing with the refectory and kitchen was carried out by Dr. Green and only completed by Mr. Tichborne Blount in or about 1774.

"The College," says Dodd, "as to the building is very mean and low (excepting the Refectory, or room where they dine, which is a large cheerful structure), but this defect is abundantly recompensed with other conveniencies of chambers and offices for servants with a large extent of Ground employed in Gardens of which there are four in number. A private one for the President's use, a common one for the Scholars, another for the students in Divinity and Masters, a fourth for the use of the Kitchen.

"The Church is but small proportioned to the rest of the College. It is dedicated to Thomas Becket, whom the Papists number amongst their Saints, as having lost his life in the defence of the Immunities of the Church. It is beautified with a fine Organ; and (as I was informed) not many years ago, they did not want several very able musicians, but of late they have very much laid that study aside, upon pretence that it called the Scholars from applying themselves to things of greater moment."

The course of studies at Douay consisted of two chief divisions. There was first the course of "Humanities" which lasted for five years and consisted of the ordinary scholastic education of the period. It was divided into classes known respectively as Figures or Rudiments, Grammar, Syntax, Poetry and Rhetoric, names which originally bore special relation to the work of the class.<sup>1</sup>

When a boy had finished his year of Rhetoric, if a layman his school-days were at an end and he returned to England; but if he wished to be a priest he entered on the higher course of "Divinity," which consisted of two years Philosophy and four years Theology. During the latter years of his course a "divine" received the various orders leading up to the priesthood. So that though the divines were still *in statu pupillari* there was a wide difference between them and the boys.

This education, which we shall trace more in detail as we proceed, was according to the standards then in vogue a good one; the chief drawback being the narrowed outlook unavoidably resulting to a student who entered the college as a child

<sup>1</sup> These traditional names are still in use with slight and unimportant variations in several of our older Catholic Colleges, though they no longer express the work done by each class.



THE ENGLISH COLLEGE AT DOUAY, AS IT WAS FROM 1602 TO 1722.



and after some years left it as a young man, absolutely ignorant of any way of life save that which he had seen within its walls. The plan of studies as in all schools at that time was almost exclusively classical. At the end of his course a boy of ordinary abilities had a sound knowledge of Greek and Latin to which many added French. In the five schools of Humanities there were at this time fewer than forty boys and the divines were still less numerous.<sup>1</sup>

In accordance with the custom often practised at Douay, a custom which originated in Elizabeth's reign when Walsingham's spies made their way even into the colleges abroad, Challoner took an assumed name, and while at Douay he was known by his mother's maiden name of Willard.<sup>2</sup> On his arrival in this new world he would make speedy acquaintance with the authorities. First came an interview with the procurator, the Rev. Edward Dicconson, who was responsible for the material up-keep of the college, and whose first duty to the boy was to take charge of all the money he had with him, that it might be laid out on his behalf as occasion arose, the balance to be strictly accounted for and returned to him on his departure. Next he would interview Cuthbert Perkinson, the "Prefect of the Wardrobe," who would give him the college uniform, a black cassock, a surtout "placed upon the shoulders" and a collar band.<sup>3</sup> Thirdly, he would be placed under the care of the general prefect, the Rev. Laurence Green, whose duty it was to enforce discipline throughout the house. Lastly came an examination by the Rev. William Crathorne, the prefect of studies, who found the boy's knowledge sufficient to exempt him from the work done in the lower classes—the "schools" of "Figures" and "Grammar"—so that when the summer holidays were over and work began again on 1st October, Challoner took his place in the school of Syntax.

<sup>1</sup> See a letter from Dr. Witham to Mr. Hind dated 22nd Sept., 1736 (Oscott MSS., Stonor Papers, fol. 332). "Give me leave to tell you that I have at this very day, unless I be mistaken in my account, 39 in Figures only, more than I ever had yet and more than I find my predecessor had for many years in all the Humanity Schools put together."

<sup>2</sup> One of his books now preserved at St. Edmund's College, Old Hall, contains the signature "Ric. Willard" in his own writing.

<sup>3</sup> This dress, as worn half a century later, is shown in an oil painting of Charles Butler, reproduced in Mgr. Ward's *The Dawn of the Catholic Revival*.



Combining the information given by the Constitutions with that afforded by Dodd we can reconstruct the daily routine of the boy with considerable exactness, and trace his manner of life. Like all the students, except those that were very young, he had a private room to himself, but he was expected to make his own bed and keep his room clean. At five o'clock he rose, and half an hour later attended the chapel for meditation and Mass. Any student who was absent from meditation was required to supply the half an hour of mental prayer out of his recreation time. And no one was allowed to hear a private Mass, because the Community Mass was offered daily for the conversion of England and Scotland, for which all were required to pray. In the chapel the part next the altar was occupied by the divines, who were arranged choir-wise, the choir then accommodating forty: while the body of the church facing the altar was filled with the boys. After Mass there was breakfast, consisting of bread and butter. At eight o'clock they all went to their class-rooms for study.

Of the work he had to do in his first year's school-life we gain some idea from the directions laid down for the guidance of the master of Syntax, in the College Constitutions. The master is to enter the class-room at eight o'clock in the morning where for the first half-hour he reads the exercises. During the second half-hour he must ask questions on the rules of syntax, at nine o'clock he begins to explain the author for half an hour, at the end of which time he hears the Greek construing and sets a theme to be given in after dinner. At ten o'clock he dismisses the class. Presumably the theme had to be done before dinner, which was served at midday and at which each boy was given half a pound of meat, a quantity that was doubled on Sundays and holidays. Dodd adds the detail that "Their bread and beer is of the best sort, and of this they may have at discretion".

At two o'clock they reassembled in class, when for half an hour the master corrected the themes set in the morning. After this he heard the boys construe the portion of the author he had explained previously. At three o'clock he explained a fresh portion of the author for next day and at half-past three set a theme for the morrow. At four the class was again dismissed. The master is directed to see that while the theme

of one boy is being corrected the rest attend. If a difficulty occurs he is to explain it carefully, cause the boys to note and repeat his examples, and fix a definite penalty for any one making the same mistake in future. Any boy requiring special attention must receive it outside the hours of class.

Challoner's first master at Douay was Rev. Joseph Horton, who remains a mere name to us. He taught him for three successive years, as the usual custom was for a master to teach the classes in succession, thus accompanying the same boys up the school, as is done in Jesuit colleges to this day.

The thoroughness with which the boys were grounded in Latin appears in the minute directions to the master. Thus from the feast of St. Remigius (1st October) to the feast of St. Luke (18th October) he is to revise the grammar and other work which they had done in the previous year. In this—the early part of the scholastic year—they are to read the *Epistolæ Familiares* in the morning and Cicero *de Amicitia* or *de Senectute* in the afternoon. At the beginning of the following May they substitute the works of a poet for the Epistles, and the second book *de Natura deorum* for the afternoon work. At this time they also began to read a Greek author. On Saturdays after half an hour's repetition they were to spend an hour in attending to the "disputations," after which they were to write an essay. In the afternoon the same course was followed except during the last half-hour which was devoted to religious instruction.

One quaint direction bids the master of Syntax see that at the beginning of the year his boys are provided with Latin forms of welcome for English guests, "lest they should be found unprepared at their coming". Yet if he wishes he may compose them himself and have them "impromptu".

The plan of work has been thus minutely traced, at the risk of proving tedious, because it appears to throw interesting light on the methods of education then in vogue. It must be noted that arithmetic is confined to the lowest class and that no time is given to mathematics or history. It was believed that the classic authors were the best means of developing intelligence, and that grammar and prose compositions afforded sufficient training in accuracy. In work of this nature Challoner's first year at Douay passed. Though he was young

for the class he seems to have more than held his own, and as time went on he was recognised as one of the most promising boys then in the house. His memory was remarkably retentive, and Dr. Milner recalls that as an old man he used to repeat passages from the Greek poets which he had learned when a schoolboy at Douay.

In the summer of 1706 he was promoted to the school of "Poetry," in which class he would read certain prescribed works of Claudian, Statius, Virgil, Horace, Sallust, Cæsar and Cicero. The boys in this class were expected to prepare and give public declamations on the fourth Sunday of each month in the refectory, and in a more solemn manner three times a year. Like the syntaxians they were also required to have some "impromptu" forms of welcome ready for visitors or for newly-ordained priests celebrating their first Mass. In "Rhetoric," the class which he entered in October, 1707, the boys appear to have confined themselves chiefly to Cicero, Virgil, Horace and Seneca, but for the first time mention is made of history. It does not appear from the Constitutions what was the scope of their historical studies, though they are urged to pay special attention to the history of Rome. They furnished the refectory declamations on the third Sunday of each month, and were equally liable to be called on for a suitable salutation of visitors.

The following midsummer Challoner completed his school-course and henceforth devoted himself entirely to the studies requisite for the immediate preparation for the priesthood. These studies for the next two years were devoted to a course of scholastic philosophy which was substantially the same as that still given in Catholic seminaries and which forms an indispensable preparation for the Theology of the Schools.

Soon after Challoner had become a "Philosopher" the time came for him to take the "College Oath" and to make his profession of Faith. This was probably preparatory to receiving the tonsure, though the date of this ceremony has not been recorded in his case. The college oath really included two oaths, the first of which was prescribed by the Constitutions of the college, confirmed by the Holy See in the year 1600, while the latter was imposed upon the students of all pontifical colleges by Pope Urban VIII. in 1625 and reimposed with

further variations by Pope Alexander VII. in 1660. Kneeling before the president, Dr. Paston, in the presence of two of the professors, Laurence Rigby and Cuthbert Perkinson, Challoner, then aged seventeen, took his oath on 3rd November, 1708. It so fully expresses the spirit in which these young men undertook their special training for the priesthood that no apology is needed for setting it forth in full.

"I, Richard Challoner,<sup>1</sup> an Alumnus of the English College at Douay, considering the divine benefits which I have received, particularly that which has led me from my country now afflicted with heresy, and which has made me a member of His Catholic Church, desiring moreover to show myself not altogether unmindful of such great mercy of God, have resolved to offer myself to His divine service, so far as I am able for furthering the end of this College: and I promise and swear before Almighty God that I am ready and will be ever ready, so far as His most holy Grace shall help me, to receive Holy Orders in due time and to return to England in order to gain the souls of others as often and when it shall seem good to the Superior of this College so to command. In the meantime while I dwell here I promise to live peaceably and quietly, and manfully to obey the constitutions and rules of the College."

The second oath, which provided for more special contingencies, will be found in an appendix.<sup>2</sup> The "Oath of Profession of Faith" consisted of the creed of Pope Pius IV. to which was added a clause promising not to disturb the peace or discipline of the college. Before taking these oaths the student went through a "retreat" which lasted for eight or ten days in order that he might consider and prepare for his future college life, and during this retreat he made a general confession of his whole life.<sup>3</sup>

But his philosophical studies and the quiet college life were soon to receive a rude interruption by events of world-wide

<sup>1</sup> Though Challoner was called "Richard Willard" at Douay he used his real name in signing official documents; thus in the profession of faith signed by professors and students on 10th April, 1710, he signed "Ricardus Challoner, Acolythus". The original document is in the Westminster Archives and is interesting as containing the earliest signature of his that has been preserved.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>3</sup> For an account of the retreats as observed at Douay in 1723, see an article by Mr. Edmund Bishop, *Downside Review*, xvii., Dec., 1898.



interest. The European War which had broken out in 1702 between France and the Confederation of England, Holland, Austria and the Empire, was still raging. The capture of the Spanish Netherlands had from the first been an important feature of the Allies' plan of campaign, inasmuch as the conquest of this part of the Low Countries would lay open the northern frontier of France. The Duke of Marlborough, however, who was commander-in-chief of the English and Dutch forces, had not been able to accomplish any part of this plan until 1706, when the decisive battle of Ramillies resulted in the surrender of town after town, and the French were driven back on their line of frontier fortresses. Nothing of any moment happened in the following year, but the campaign of 1708 brought the war nearer and nearer to Douay. The great victory of Oudenarde caused Marlborough and Prince Eugene to decide on the invasion of France. The siege of Lille was the first step in the proposed march on Paris. Lille—not twenty miles from Douay—capitulated on 22nd October. The year 1709 brought with it a winter of extraordinary severity which added to the universal distress. Famine, war and the prospect of invasion combined were too strong for Louis XIV. who was now willing to treat, but the extravagant terms laid down by the Allies only caused an outburst of patriotism in France and the war was renewed with fresh vigour. Tournai fell and Marlborough marched on Mons, which after the dearly-bought victory of Malplaquet, capitulated. Then came a brief respite and hopes of peace during the negotiations that were opened at Gertruydenburg. These, however, failed and in the spring of 1710 Douay was at last attacked.

Dr. Paston arranged for most of the priests and students to leave the college while there was yet time, and accordingly the main body of the community escaped to Lille, where temporary accommodation was arranged for them. A few, however, were left to watch over the property of the college and these lived for two months in a state of distressing anxiety. It is not known whether Challoner was one of these or whether he went to Lille with the rest, but in either case he would have every reason for taking the keenest interest in the progress of the siege.

The position of the English colony, when they realised that



the town, which had given them hospitable shelter for a century and a half, was to be besieged by an army of their own countrymen, was extremely difficult, especially as their number was sufficiently large to render their conduct a matter of moment to the French authorities. Besides the English College there was the Irish College, the Scottish College, the Benedictine Monastery of St. Gregory, and the house of Franciscan Recollects. On the one hand their closest interests were bound up with the town; on the other their spirit of patriotism strengthened by exile must have affected their relations with the inhabitants and the French army. In the early days of April, M. d'Albergotti, a lieutenant-general in the king's army, had been sent to take the necessary steps for the defence of the town.

The allied troops were close at hand, but owing to the strength of the fortifications they evidently did not expect to reduce the town without a prolonged attack, which necessitated careful preparations. On the 22nd of April the troops surrounded the town-walls and the generals chose their quarters. Six days were spent in disposing the various camps and lines of attack. By the end of the month all was ready and the besieged looking from their walls were able to realise the strength of the attack. The walls between the *Porte d'Equerchin* and the *Porte d'Oc* were to bear the brunt of the siege. On the right were the Imperial troops, Prussians, Danes and Saxons commanded by the Prussian general the Prince of Anhalt; the German commander, the Prince of Holsteinbeck; and Lord Orkney, an Englishman. On the left the Prince of Orange, Lieutenant-General Witors and Lieutenant-General de Donat were in command. Reinforcements of cavalry were stationed at some little distance, while the whole operation was supported by another army of 70,000 men.

Yet the town determined to hold out. On the 25th of April M. d'Albergotti held a great meeting in the town-hall in order to secure the co-operation of the townsmen in the defence. There is nothing to show whether the superiors of the English College were represented there. Unfortunately there is at this critical time no record of the fortunes of the college, which must have been affected by the events of the siege and by the general distress and privation already prevailing. D'Albergotti at the

meeting which represented the divers interests of the town, declared his intention of offering violent resistance to the attack and demanded the sum of 100,000 livres, a claim which he was persuaded with great difficulty to reduce to 60,000 livres.

Probably the burgesses, in submitting at the outset to this heavy burden, had in mind the measures already taken by the new governor, and recognised in him one who would carry out the king's will without much consideration for them if he found them slow to accept his propositions. He had already used his extensive powers and that in a way calculated to impress the citizens at large, for on the 23rd he had seized without payment 380 measures of wine, a step followed on the next day by the taking of 5,000 tuns of beer, while the day of the meeting was signalized by wholesale exactions. A thrifty citizen of Douay, one Charles Caudron, made sad note in his diary of these requisitions. From him we learn that on that very day of meeting, perhaps while the meeting was itself deliberating, D'Albergotti's troopers had seized all the meat and beasts to be found in the butchers' shops and slaughterhouses throughout the town, taking 400 sheep from one luckless farmer alone; in addition to which 300 vests and several hundred pairs of shoes were required and obtained "*toujours sans payer*".

These exactions, however, were but a prelude to the scenes of confusion on the 26th of April when the governor seized from the houses of the townsfolk all things that were necessary for the conduct of the siege. The results of this levy is described as a scene of confusion and pillage. Doubtless measures of this sort were a stern necessity, but however willing the inhabitants may have been to surrender their private property for the common good, such sacrifices must have brought home to them their unhappy position—a beleaguered city with but distant hope of relief and the immediate prospect of a fierce cannonade.

On the 30th of April the first cannon was heard—but the attack had not yet commenced, though the long preparations in the enemy's camp were almost at an end. The guns heard were at the Castle of Wagnonville, defended by twenty dragoons and a hundred grenadiers. The Dutch bombarded it all night,

with the result that dragoons and grenadiers were killed or made prisoners of war. Four quiet days passed, until on the night of the 4th of May a trench was opened between the Porte d'Esquerchin and the Porte d'Oc. The works were pushed forward with rapidity, but nearly a fortnight passed without further incident. D'Albergotti's supply of meat seized from the butchers had presumably come to an end, for on the 10th of May he seized all meat to be found in dwelling-houses and many cows belonging to private persons. At length the moment for the attack arrived. On the night of the 13th of May there was great noise in the trenches of the besiegers which aroused the worst fears of the besieged. At three o'clock in the morning the first shot came crashing into the town, twenty pieces of cannon and twenty mortars firing from the left, twenty-three cannons and fifteen mortars on the right. Through the early morning hours and on during the day these persisted in a heavy fire. When evening came the Church of St. Albin was wrecked save for its belfry which, though very damaged, was yet standing and remained so through all the subsequent attacks until 16th June. The Carthusian and Capuchin monasteries were in ruins; other religious houses, including that of the English Recollects, which stood near the present Church of St. Jacques, were riddled with bullets.

The attack was fierce but the besieged replied with vigour. This bombardment aroused the townsfolk to fresh energy, and they got their 60,000 livres paid to the commandant on the 16th. This same 16th, however, saw a redoubled fire upon the town, but particularly at the brave little fort of La Brayelle which with its two small pieces blazed away pluckily at the thirty cannons which were attacking it. On the nights of the 17th and 18th the fire never ceased; sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other the bombs rained on the town. One fired the Hôtel de Ville, which was saved, however, by the activity of the citizens. The unfortunate town now felt the full brunt of the determined attack, and horrors were multiplied in the streets. On the 20th both the Rue Saint Albin and Rue des Chartreux were in flames, and several citizens helping to subdue the fire were killed or wounded by the shot of the enemy. The sheriffs sent a flag of truce to beg the besieging generals to spare the public buildings, a

demand which, it is not surprising to learn, had little effect. The people now thoroughly terrified grew restless and difficult to control, but D'Albergotti persisted in the defence.

Charles Caudron, whom we have already cited and who by this time had other things to count than sheep or shoes requisitioned by military authority, endeavouring to record the horror of the time, quotes the statement of a certain unnamed officer of bombardiers, to the effect that after thirty years' service, twenty sieges in which he was attacking and four sieges in which he had been attacked, he had never seen so heavy a fire as the Dutch kept up upon Douay on the nights of the 18th, 19th, and 20th May. Leaving this statement for what it is worth, Caudron, speaking from his own observation, says that it was as a deluge of fire; that no living man had seen the like. From eight o'clock in the evening till five o'clock in the morning at least 1,000 bombs and 2,000 bullets fell upon the town. The English Recollects alone collected in their house 150 bullets. Convents and houses were battered while the Rue d'Esquerchin, the Rue d'Arras and the Rue aux Capucins were utterly wrecked. There was not a corner of the town where one was safe, and no citizen dared to go to bed.

The days passed by, but the fire never slackened. The night of the 24th in particular was noted for the extraordinary fierceness of the bombardment. It was on that night that the Rue du Pont-Aval was partly burned—traces of which fire, it is said, may be seen there to this day.

Towards the end of May the besieged town, by this time almost at the end of endurance, suddenly received hope of succour. It was whispered that the enemy would themselves be attacked and in self-defence would be compelled to raise the siege. On the 27th they even saw their hopes in realisation. Almost the entire besieging army filed off towards Vitry. The people of Douay, till then shut up within their walls, were able to hold communication with country-folk without, and learned that a French army was coming to their relief. D'Albergotti even made a sally so far as Pont-à-Raches. All these hopes were however to fail. The marshal commanding the French army not being able to cross the Scarpe at Vitry "deemed it prudent to retreat". Whereupon the allied armies returned to their position outside the walls of Douay, D'Albergotti hastily



drew in again and the position was as before, except that the town had now no hope.

For three weeks longer the now desperate resistance was kept up. On the 3rd of June the besiegers attacked once more with redoubled fury. Towards midnight they fired a mine which killed all the officers and men of a company of Grenadiers belonging to a regiment from Piedmont. Five days later they exploded another mine about ten in the evening and at midnight hurled numbers of bombs into the town. Once more the magistrates of the town interceded with the stubborn commandant, and this time M. d'Albergotti consented to send a drummer to the attacking officers in order to obtain a passport for a deputation to the princes in command of the combined forces. This delicate mission was entrusted to Joseph Rocha, one of the sheriffs, and Arnoul Desurque, a lawyer. They were commissioned to obtain the safety of the churches, colleges and other public buildings. They set out for Flers where the Prince of Orange received them courteously, heard their petition, but detained them until the day when the town capitulated.

The rest of the story is a list of disasters. The besiegers renewed their attack again and again; the garrison fought with desperate and stubborn fury. On the 12th of June at seven in the morning a fire broke out in the arsenal, caught the grenades, and forty-two soldiers perished; on the 16th the tower of St. Albin fell. Want now made itself felt and the governor seized for public distribution all private stores of bread and wine. On the 23rd, fifty pieces of cannon attacked the town on all sides, making breaches in the walls. The end was now at hand. On the 24th, at three in the morning, the besiegers concentrated their forces on the side of the Esquerchin Gate. The besieged fought in despair amid terrible slaughter. The assault grew hotter, the breaches were enlarged, further defence was impossible. At two in the afternoon a parley was sounded. At three o'clock hostages were sent, M. de Brandelet, commandant of the Swiss, the Duke de Mortemart and M. de Trouville.

The result of the negotiations was that the French troops were to leave Douay with their arms and baggage and all the honours of war. They were escorted as far as Cambrai. During the siege of fifty-two nights their numbers had been reduced from 8,000 to 2,000 men. Before leaving, D'Albergotti,



who acquitted himself bravely and prudently in a difficult position, returned to the citizens 39,000 livres of their levy which remained in his hands.

On the 28th of June, two months after the opening of the siege, the Morel Gate was delivered to the besiegers, and Douay came under the dominion of Holland. Count Robert Vincent de Hompesch was appointed governor on the 30th of June, and one of his first duties was to welcome Prince Eugene and the Duke of Marlborough on their entry into the town on the 3rd of July.

It would be interesting to know whether the great English general found time to become acquainted with the communities of his fellow-countrymen settled in the town. The interests of the university and colleges had been carefully safeguarded by the conditions of capitulation, so that they had nothing to fear from the new masters of the town. The new governor was just and moderate and the new garrison lived in strict discipline. One church was assigned to the Protestants, but in all other respects the Catholic life of the town and the university went on as before. The historian of the town of Douay concludes his account of the capitulation by remarking that the Dutch occupation during the two years that it lasted, though burdensome, was not oppressive.

The liberties of the English College remained intact, and doubtless the usual life was soon resumed within its walls, but the siege of Douay must have left an ineffaceable impression upon the minds of those who lived through it.

## CHAPTER III.

### THEOLOGICAL STUDIES.

1710-1716.

WHEN the college reassembled after the siege to begin the work of the new scholastic year, which commenced as usual on the 1st of October, Richard Challoner began the four-years' course of theological studies which were to form the immediate preparation for the priesthood.

At this time the theological teaching of the college was under the cloud of an unjust suspicion, which, it was feared, threatened the gravest consequences. This danger had arisen in the bitter disputes caused by the rise of Jansenism. The clergy in England had been accused of favouring Jansenistic views, and at the beginning of the century a controversy was raging in England as to whether any support was being given to the new doctrines or not. In their anxiety to prevent these doctrines spreading, the Jesuits in England were very active, with the result that many secular priests believed that they were endeavouring to gain control of the administration of the English College. Dodd, who was always hostile to the Jesuits, expressed this view in his *History of Doway College*. Having given a brief account of the attack made upon the theological teaching of the vice-president, Dr. Edward Hawarden, he continues: "It was not long before this accusation against the College was sent to Rome, but so privately, with such an air of truth and by persons of such supposed credit and reputation, that the College was upon the point of being condemned and ruined before they either knew what their fault was, or who their accusers. Nay, their enemies were so secure of success in this affair that a Jesuit was half-way upon the road out of the North of England, expecting daily a summons from Rome, to turn out Dr. Paston, and seize upon the College."<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> P. 34.

Jesuits at once denied these allegations. Father Thomas Hunter, S.J., without loss of time published *A Modest Defence of the Clergy and Religious*, in which he dealt with Dodd's statements categorically.

But though it is difficult to suppose that the Jesuits had any desire to undertake a work of such difficulty and such opprobrium as this, the accusation at that time was widely repeated and believed. Some apparent credit was lent to the rumours by the very obscurity of the proceedings. Dr. Hawarden had already left the college in 1707, hoping that as most of the attacks had been directed against him personally, his withdrawal would end the matter. But this was not so: the accusations continued. In October, 1709, Bishop George Witham, at that time Vicar Apostolic of the Midland District, wrote to Dr. Paston<sup>1</sup> informing him that an accusation had been laid before the Pope to the effect that Jansenism was publicly taught and professed at Douay, whereon the Pope had ordered the vicars apostolic to remove the professors, and substitute others in their place under pain of forfeiting the papal endowment of the college. The bishop added that, as the names of the suspected persons and the objectionable doctrines were not specified, they had written to Rome for further information. In the meantime he begged Dr. Paston to make all inquiries and to do what in him lay to save the college from such a severe blow as the threatened punishment.

Dr. Paston took the line that the accusation was wholly and entirely false. Friends of the college were active in its defence. From the Court of the Stuarts at St. Germain's came a strongly worded testimonial in favour of the college, signed by the Duke of Berwick and other noblemen, in which they declared that having examined the whole question they found the accusation false.<sup>2</sup> Prince James, still regarded by most Catholics as their king, himself addressed a letter to Rome, and such representations were not without weight. Nevertheless there were still suspicions to be allayed in the minds of certain cardinals; and Cardinal Caprara, the protector of the English College, was anxious that Dr. Paston should himself come to Rome to answer the charges in person.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dodd, *Church History*, iii., 520.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 521.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter to Lord Caryll, p. 522.

This is probably what Dodd alludes to when he states:<sup>1</sup> "A certain Cardinal, a friend to the clergy, gave them notice what a blow was coming, an agent is sent to Rome, proceedings are stopped. A visit is ordered to be made to the College to examine into the particulars of this accusation, but with such extraordinary circumstances of partiality, that the very person, who had many years declared himself an enemy to the College, was to be the chief visitor. Upon this an appeal was laid before the Pope's Nuncio at Brussels, that an alteration might be made in the visitors, since one of them was both judge and accuser, which must certainly be a practice not to be allowed of amongst those who design fair things. In this posture I found the affairs of the College, when our Army entered the town. They were doubtful of the success but hoped the Nuncio would be so just as to allow them impartial inspectors into their concerns." The Nuncio did, indeed, do justice in this matter and the inquisition was held by impartial judges with results entirely favourable to the college. All the divines, including Challoner, had to appear before the commissioners and answer questions as to what they were taught. A full account of the proceedings is given by Rev. Richard Martin, writing on the 20th of November, 1712, to an unknown correspondent, and repeating a letter he had received from Douay.

"November 20th, 1712 [*vere* 1711].<sup>2</sup>

"HONRD SIR,

"There have been two men att ye English College att Douai to examine their Jansenistical opinions (as they

<sup>1</sup> Dodd, *Church History*, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Ushaw MSS., i., 2, printed by Rev. Edwin Bonney in *Ushaw Magazine*, March, 1904, vol. xiv., p. 19. Although the date at the head of this letter is 1712 the substance of the letter was written a year earlier. At the end will be found the statement: "This is a true copy of a letter received lately from a friend at ye College". But as we know from other sources, the visitation took place in October, 1711. A paper in the archives of the Old Brotherhood dated 26th October, 1711, described the visitation as just over. Again, this letter says that the result is not yet known, whereas Dr. Witham knew it in July, 1712, and in a letter dated 9th August in that year he states that he was receiving congratulations on the happy result. The visitation could not possibly have taken place in October, 1712, as the town was then being besieged by the French, and all the students were at Arras. We must, therefore, conclude that Mr. Martin in November, 1712, forwarded to his correspondent the letter written in the previous November and which in the disturbed state of the Low Countries might well have been considerably delayed in transit.

called ym). The one was ye Dean of ye Archbishops Cathedral of Mechlin, ye other ye President of ye said Archbishops Seminary. These two men were pitched upon by ye Nunce as ye only two men he had any particular confidence in, in all ye low countryes. Mr. Tunstall was ye man yt was employed in ye business and it kept him four months abroad; now we have him att home again but how long God knows. . . . The Dean had writ a book against Jansenism by which before he came we judged him to be a Molinist, but were strangely mistaken in ye man; for when we had him all ye people in ye house protested they never saw honester men or fitter for our purpose yn both of them were, as being of no small authority and Thomists in ye bottom, wch ye Dean professed ye first night he came. They examined from ye President downwards to ye end of ye Divines, who all swore to what they said except ye President, and six boyes were questioned. If you have a curiosity to know ye boyes yt were asked, there was Jo: Melling, Hen: Kendall, Hugh Haydock, Nic: Skelton, Will: Boamer, and Jo: Brown. Then they went fairly to work for when they had put you your question theyd write your answer down, then read it to you to see if you liked what you had said, if not you might correct what you pleased, for, said they, we come to do justice not to catch at every word spoken. If any one should chance to tell something favouring us (as that ye Superiors had inculcated devotion to ye saints and our Ladye, ye use of these two things in ye discipline of ye house, as twice a day ye Littanies of ye Saints, every night our Ladyes wch are solemnly sung every Saturday, ye two pair of beads to be said every week by one of ye Philosophers, ye fasting before our Ladyes dayes and ye like, for these were ye common questions) theyd be very inquisitive into ye affair till they understood it and yn penned it all down. They spent two dayes in asking questions, two dayes in examining Dr. Hawarden's dictates, and two writeing over fair ye answers of all ye house (Mr. Kendall being secretary, for ye Pope's notary was sick) and two more in swearing all of ym. They were desired, nay begged to read Mr. Rigbys dictates but they would not, in fine. They might guess at them by seeing all his Theses. In a word they were complete schollars especially ye Dean. They took ye discipline of ye house with ym concern-



ing invocation of saints, devotion to our Ladye, frequent Communion and Indulgences, a letter signed by all ye Seniors concerning Dr. Hawarden, with sevrall pieces of his dictates in wch he has opened his mind upon these Topicks and the propositions of Jansenius and all other things yt may tend yt way. They have taken of both sorts good and bad, ye bad will be of little or no harm because ye contrary is so strong upon ye same subject. What will be ye event of it I cant tell: they say yt for ye house att present theres not ye least difficulty and they think ye same of ye rest. They left us upon All Souls day. They were extremely pleased with Mr. Temple and talked some sevrall times afterwards about him saying yt he'd make a most excellent missioner; he had such an honest way with him. They took notice of sevrall others and said 'Habetis plures insignes'. This is a true copy of a letter received lately from a friend att ye College by

"Yr much obliged humble servant,

"RICHARD MARTIN."

The final result is given in a letter written by Bishop George Witham, who states: "They then made report in these terms, that they found both the writings and persons in the house free from all suspected doctrine of Jansenism or any other heresy; that they there found excellent professors and an exact discipline observed in the College".<sup>1</sup>

For a year, from October, 1710, to October, 1711, Challoner continued his studies in theology without anything of special note intervening. Then came a change. The custom existed at Douay of selecting any masters that were wanted to teach classics in the college from the students in theology, and Challoner's success in his own course of "Humanities" caused him now to be selected to fill such a vacancy. So on the feast of St. Remigius (1st October), the opening day of term, he was appointed to teach the class or "school" of Poetry with the somewhat misleading title of "Professor of Poetry".<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ushaw MSS., i., 504, quoted by Rev. E. Bonney (*loc. cit.*). There is a mass of documentary evidence with regard to this charge of Jansenism in the archives of the Diocese of Westminster, of Ushaw College and of the "Old Brotherhood," while every collection of Catholic papers of that date has some reference to this burning question.

<sup>2</sup> Douay Diary, "In festo S. Remig. an. 1711 et pro an. 1712 Profess. Poeseos d. Rich. Challoner hic Willard".

For the next year, therefore, he took his two-hours class twice a day, and patiently discharged the daily task of correcting themes and exercises. Apparently he continued his own theological studies, as well as he was able, in such time as remained over when his duties as teacher were finished. There is no evidence as to how he succeeded in this new work, except his subsequent career as professor of philosophy and theology in which he spent seventeen years of his life. From this we may argue that he satisfied his superiors and marked himself as a man fit for promotion.

Meanwhile in the summer of 1712 there came another interruption to his somewhat chequered college life. The war was still dragging along, but affairs had sunk into a dead-lock without any immediate prospect of relief. Louis XIV. had failed in his designs on Europe, but on the other hand the Allies were unable either to place their candidate the Archduke Charles on the throne of Spain or to invade France. In England the war had become unpopular and was a mere party question. The Tories, who came into power in 1710, were anxious to end hostilities and were not over-scrupulous in the matter of loyalty to our Allies; Marlborough had returned home in disgrace; and by the beginning of 1712 King Louis began to regain lost ground. The Duc de Villars and his army at length appeared before Douay with the intention of reconquering it for France. A new siege, with the parts reversed, was begun on the Eve of the Assumption, the Dutch stubbornly defending the town they had found so difficult to capture two years previously. On this occasion again Dr. Paston removed all his students, sending them to Arras; and it was well he did so for the fabric of the college was much injured by shot and shell during the four months that the siege lasted. Finally at Christmas the French retook the town, which has ever since remained under French government.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the English collegians at Arras continued their regular way of life as far as was possible under the altered cir-

<sup>1</sup> "1712. Hoc anno alteram obsidionem ab Exercitu Gallorum sub duce de Villars passa est haec civitas a vigilia Assumptionis B. Virginis usque ad diem Nativitatis quando iterum capta est, nostri exceptis sex aut septem egressi sunt Atribatum et illic manserunt. Tormentis bellicis maxime expositum fuit hoc Collegium et moenia multis in locis perforata" (Diary, fol. 25).

cumstances. The 1st of October, 1712, found them beginning as usual another scholastic year. Challoner now exchanged the class of "Poetry" for that of "Rhetoric," but early in October Mr. Simon Berington, who had been professor of philosophy for some years, returned to England; and Challoner, though he had only finished his own course of philosophy two years before, was appointed to this important office.<sup>1</sup>

The method of teaching philosophy and theology at Douay was by dictated lectures, a survival from the time when text-books were both costly and cumbrous. The professor read his lecture slowly, and his students wrote it out in their note-books. The notes of lectures so taken down were known as "Dictates": and most Catholic libraries possess a few of these stout leather-bound octavo volumes, which in due course were carried to England by their owners, served them during their priestly lives as works of reference, and were left by them after death to their friends or to the chapel they had served.<sup>2</sup> The "Dictates" of such professors as Edward Hawarden, or, at a later date, Alban Butler, were highly valued. This method of dictation was prescribed by the Constitutions of the college, revised and issued under the authority of Cardinal Howard in 1690. These expressly provide that the lectures are to be taken down in writing. Charles Butler states that Dr. Challoner in after years strongly recommended the practice which he had followed as a student "of imprinting steadily into his mind during the time of the dictation, the meaning of what was dictated to him," and then of reading the whole through with great attention immediately after the lecture.

As professor of philosophy he was required to give in this way two lectures a day; one hour in the morning, another in the afternoon, while another hour was to be set aside for disputation, preparation for this having been made by a half-hour's explanation of the question to be discussed. Once a week an hour and a half was devoted to a public repetition. The course was to be divided between the two professors in such a way that

<sup>1</sup> Douay Diary, "An. 1712 et pro an. 1713 d. Berrington cui die 6 *bris* successit d. Rich. Challoner, Phiae. Prof."

<sup>2</sup> There is a large collection of these at Old Hall, the earliest being dated 1593 and the latest two centuries later. Often they bear the writer's name, and the dates of beginning and ending, but in no case is there any indication of the professor's name.

it would occupy exactly two years. The system of Aristotle, as it was taught at that time, was closely followed, while "new and random opinions" were to be avoided. The Constitutions enumerate the various heads in detail; "of the five Universals; of Categories; of Argument; and other matters usually treated in Logic; of the various questions which in the eight books of Physics are contained; of the Earth and the Firmament; of Production and Corruption; of the Soul; of Metaphysics; of Man's Ultimate End; and of other subjects appertaining to Ethics". The time which intervened between the last public disputation and the long vacation was to be devoted to a brief consideration of the angels and the divine attributes.

Before he had been professor of philosophy very long Challoner was called on with his colleagues to take part in an official declaration of orthodoxy and fidelity to the Apostolic See. After the exoneration of the Douay professors from the charge of Jansenistic tendencies by the commissioners of the Papal Nuncio, no more was heard and the false rumours died away. But in 1713 the Constitution *Unigenitus* issued by Pope Clement XI. condemned the writings of Quesnel, who had been propagating Jansenism in popular form and had even revived some of the sterner errors of Baius; and Dr. Paston seized the opportunity afforded of making a public demonstration of the orthodox sentiments of the English College. The Constitution *Unigenitus* was gladly and willingly subscribed by all the superiors at Douay on the 16th of July, 1714.<sup>1</sup> It is signed by the president, Dr. Paston; the vice-president, Dr. Dicconson; the professor of theology, Richard Kendal; the two professors of philosophy, George Hinde and Richard Challoner; the procurator, Mr. Tunstall, Thomas Brockholes, the confessor, and Emanuel Christmas, the general prefect.

All accusations of Jansenism brought against the college professors were at length finally dispelled by the Pope's reply to their address, dated 24th May, 1715, in which he warmly praises their action, and exhorts them to maintain the purity of doctrine which they profess.

But when this consoling testimony to the orthodoxy of the college was received, the president had ceased to be troubled

<sup>1</sup> The text is printed in Dodd's *Church History*, iii., 523, though he adds initials only instead of names.



DR. EDWARD PASTON.





by false accusations or other trials. Only five days after he had subscribed the Constitution, his sudden death came with an unexpected shock to all in the college. On the 21st of July, he was passing into the garden when he was seized with an apoplectic fit. He was seventy-four years old and had ruled the college for twenty-six years, but as we have seen his tenure of office had not been a happy one. The opposition to his reforms; the prolonged anxiety as to the charges of Jansenism and the alleged intrigues to withdraw the college from secular control; the financial difficulties and serious diminution in numbers, all combined to embitter his career. Yet amid all his troubles he maintained the reputation of a holy and learned man. Dodd, who had been a student under him, wrote:—

“As to Dr. Paston’s personal character, one may truly say *his life was hidden in Christ*. Few persons enjoyed richer talents from nature; and few took more pains to conceal them from the world. He was exact in his morals but not without the weakness of being scrupulous. He had a quick conception and a happy memory, though not the best elocution, wherein he might have improved himself, had not his extraordinary humility given him a check.”

There is at Ushaw an imperfect leaf of the diary kept by Dr. Dicconson, the vice-president, from which we gain some idea of the effect in the house of this sudden passing of its chief. One side of the paper has perished, and so there are constant breaks in the narrative. But through the maimed sentences we can discern most of the original sense.

“July ye 21st. Mr. President dyed suddenly soon after he left . . . had dined with Coll Radcliff. Immediately Mr. Tunstall gave . . . London, Paris, Bru: and Rome. The seniors meeting in the . . . I read the President’s will. We made the bill in Latin to publish . . . prayers and resolved to bury him solemnly on Monday ye 23rd.”

On the following day the vice-president “went to most of ye English houses”. There is also some hint that business connected with the recently signed Constitution of Clement XI. remained to be completed, as there are broken words about “ye copy of ye constitution . . . our Seniors (as had been concluded ye day before)”.

On the 23rd of July the funeral of the president is recorded. Through the still imperfect sentences we gain some picture of

the college chapel hung in black and the Office for the Dead chanted there; of the Chapel of Our Lady of Loretto in the Church of St. Jacques also hung in black, and of the grave "in ye sayd chappel of Loretto just by ye rails," and of the pall of silk spread over the grave when all was over, to be left there for a year. Then there is brief note of a meeting of the seniors called by the vice-president, and of his suggestion that for the future peace of the house they should every one write their sentiments and inclinations so that those in England might be enabled to make a prudent choice in selecting a new president.

In the event no better or more prudent choice could have been made than Dr. Robert Witham, who was actually elected and who proved one of the greatest and most successful of the presidents of the English College. He was a Yorkshireman, being the seventh son of George Witham of Cliffe. Like his brothers George and Christopher he had been educated for the priesthood and ordained at Douay. George became vicar apostolic of the Midland District in 1703 and was translated to the Northern Vicariate in 1715. Christopher acted as chaplain to his parents at their Yorkshire home. Robert, after his ordination in 1694, continued at Douay as professor of philosophy and subsequently of theology. He returned to England either in 1698 or the following year and in 1711 was appointed by Bishop Giffard, the senior vicar apostolic, as his vicar general in the Northern District, which was at that time vacant by the death of Bishop Smith. The vacancy continued for five years, during which time Dr. Witham was in charge of the whole district, and he still held this position when he was elected president of Douay. He was then forty-eight years old, active, capable and having wide experience. During the twenty-three years that he ruled, he rebuilt the college and the chapel, regulated the finances, largely increased the number of students, and raised the studies and discipline to a high point of efficiency. He also showed the greatest confidence in Challoner, promoted him as time went on to posts of trust, and finally, when he was old and wished to resign, desired to be succeeded by him.

Under the guidance of this new friend Challoner prepared himself for the priesthood. There is no record of his receiving the minor orders or the subdiaconate, but in the year 1716



DR. ROBERT WITHAM WHEN A STUDENT AT DOUAY.





there is an entry in the college diary stating that on the 7th of March he was ordained deacon by Mgr. Jean Ernest von Löwenstein-Wertheim, Bishop of Tournai. On the 28th of the same month, which was *Sabbato in Sitientes*, the Saturday before Passion Sunday, he was ordained priest at Tournai by the same prelate, being then in his twenty-sixth year.

When Richard Challoner knelt before the bishop to receive the imposition of hands which conferred on him the priesthood he had attained the great wish of his heart. Now that he was able to offer the Holy Sacrifice, to bless, to forgive sins, there was nothing more in life that he desired except to use these powers for the greater glory of God and the salvation of men. From that moment his life in his own eyes was rounded off and complete. Whether he was to labour a longer or shorter time was to him a matter of small moment.

In the entry in the college diary recording his ordination<sup>1</sup> the president described him as "notable for learning and piety if ever man was," a testimony which needs no comment, occurring as it does in a collegiate journal, a dry official record in which compliments are not commonly found. We may see in it just the plain judgment and opinion of the men among whom he had grown up from boyhood.

The whole of Passiontide was devoted by the new priest to preparation for his First Mass. On the night of Holy Saturday the northern sky blazed with an Aurora Borealis of extraordinary brilliance which was long remembered. Looking out upon the unwonted splendour in the heavens, Challoner might well have thought of the words of the Church, *Mane videbitis gloriam Domini*, for on the following morning, Easter Sunday, he offered the Holy Sacrifice for the first time and entered upon the fulness of his priesthood.

<sup>1</sup>"(Die 28 Martii) Tornaci ab eodem Epo . . . et sacrum presbyteratus ordinem D. Ricardus Challoner (hic Willard) primarius Philosophiæ Professor, doctrina et pietate (si quis alius) conspicuus; primitias suas Deo consecravit in festo Resurrectionis Dominicæ die Aprilis duodecimo."

## CHAPTER IV.

PRIEST AND PROFESSOR AT DOUAY.

1716-1730.

AFTER Challoner's ordination his life for the next few years passed smoothly in the discharge of his duties of professor of philosophy and in the usual routine work of college life. Day by day he rose at five o'clock and half an hour later took his place in chapel for Meditation, which lasted till six, when he celebrated Mass. Each priest took it in turn to celebrate Mass for a week at a time for the conversion of England and Scotland, for which intention the High Mass on Sunday was always offered. All the other priests offered Mass once each week for the Pope, the Cardinal Protector, and the souls of Gregory XIII., Cardinal Allen, Philip II. of Spain and other benefactors of the college.

The day was spent in preparing and delivering his lectures, and in prosecuting his own studies in theology, for he aimed at taking a theological degree in the University of Douay. At half-past eight in the evening the day was brought to a close by Night Prayers in the chapel, and then all retired to their rooms, and the *magnum silentium* began, not to be broken till after Mass next morning.

Meanwhile the new president was infusing fresh life and energy into the college by his vigorous administration. The heavy debt of 40,000 florins which Dr. Paston had left was reduced to 12,000 within a year and discharged altogether by the end of 1716. The numbers in the house went up from 95 to 115 within two years. He was active too in other matters. At one time we find him in conference with the Nuncio as to the lawfulness of taking the oath of loyalty to King George as king *de facto*.<sup>1</sup> A little later he is obtaining

<sup>1</sup> Early in the year Dr. Witham caused a *Te Deum* to be sung in the college chapel to celebrate the landing of "James III." in Scotland. The failure of this

from the French royal commissioners, De La Croix and Grandvall, a declaration that the college is in good order and that its members may concur for public lectures in the university. Though he had many troubles he also had the power which enabled him to surmount them; and things went smoothly and well. Among his other activities he resumed the college diary which had been discontinued during Dr. Paston's presidency, and this *Diarium Septimum*, now in the Westminster diocesan archives, is the chief source of information for Challoner's life from 1715 to 1730, a period passed over by his early biographers well-nigh in silence. The year 1717 was uneventful, and 1718 opened with good promise. Unfortunately in July an attack of small-pox broke out in the college and the president removed twenty-four students to the country-house of La Croix, at Coutiche, but the illness disappeared in time to allow the third jubilee of the college to be kept in August. At this celebration Challoner was not present as he took advantage of the long holiday to re-visit England after an absence of thirteen years.

He left Douay for this purpose on the 17th of July and was away until September. Nothing is known of his visit except that it was on "private affairs"; but we can well imagine the joy with which he would once more meet the mother who had last seen him as a boy and who now received him again as a man and a priest. The sacrifice she had made in parting from him for so long must have been repaid in full when she assisted for the first time at her son's Mass.

It is just possible that the "private affairs" concerned not himself or his own business but that of the college, for just at this time there was a good deal of coming and going connected with the forfeiture of Catholic estates which followed on the failure of the rising of 1715. Much property devoted to "pious uses" fell into the hands of the commissioners for forfeited estates. Many Catholic families who were benefactors to the college suffered, and among others the vice-president of the English College, Dr. Dicconson, had to appear twice before the commissioners during the year in order to save some portion of the family estates, his brother Roger

enterprise was a bitter disappointment to the English College, which was thoroughly Jacobite.

having been convicted in 1716 as a rebel. This took him much from the college and interrupted his work of teaching theology, which during his absence was undertaken by the energetic president, so that Milner and Charles Butler are both mistaken in supposing that Challoner began to lecture in theology on his return from England in September, 1718.

But though he continued to teach philosophy for two years longer, he did in fact assume a new office at this time. The Reverend Richard Kendal, a learned man who had taught theology with Dr. Dicconson for five or six years, now returned to the English mission, and Dr. Witham appointed Challoner to succeed him, not indeed as professor of theology but as prefect of studies.

This post gave him supervision and control over all the work in the college, and involved duties which are now usually performed by the headmaster of a school. Thus it became his business to place new boys in suitable classes,<sup>1</sup> to arrange the extent of the work which each master was to teach, to watch over the way in which the masters performed their duties, to conduct the examinations and generally to act as immediate superior of the school as distinct from the divinity course.

But though Challoner had not yet become professor of theology it was nevertheless quite in the usual course of events for the professor of philosophy to succeed to the chair of theology whenever a vacancy should occur, and with a view to fitting himself for this occupation at a later date he continued his private theological studies, to such effect that in the month of April, 1719, he took the degree of Bachelor and Licentiate in Theology in the University of Douay.<sup>2</sup> Though he did this, as the college diary says, with great success, his thesis led to a dispute between the authorities of the English College and the rector of the University.

The proposition which Challoner undertook to defend, and which led to the difficulty, was that no Thomist could deny the Pope to be infallible, having regard to the teaching of St.

<sup>1</sup> The number of students this year was 91. Theology 8, philosophy 16, rhetoric 9, poetry 9, syntax 12, grammar 14, rudiments 23.

<sup>2</sup> "Aprilis 1719. Ad gradum Baccalaureatus et Licentiatu in sacra Theologia cum ingenti omnium applausu promotus est D. Richardus Challoner hic Willard, Phiæ Professor" (College Diary).

Thomas himself.<sup>1</sup> The invitations to the disputation had been already issued when Dr. Witham received a letter from the *Rector magnificus* of the University, Dr. Brissant, ordering the thesis to be put off till he could consult the wishes of the French Government on the subject, the Gallican propensities of the Court rendering the minister susceptible as to the manner in which the Pope's prerogatives were asserted. The professors of the university, however, would not support their rector in this. They would not allow him to postpone the disputation and denied that he had power to stop it. The president wrote on advice of others to the Chancellor of France, with the result that permission was given for the question of papal infallibility to be discussed. In the meantime the Bishop of Arras had taken offence and declared that Challoner had acted imprudently, having regard to the circumstances of the time. But as permission had been received from the chancellor, no more could be said and the thesis was duly allowed. About the same time the Discalced Carmelites began to maintain the Pope's infallibility, so that Challoner was not alone in his temerity.

In the following July the president himself appeared before the University of Douay as a candidate for the doctorate, and on this occasion he selected Challoner to assist him as *Terminorum interpres* at the public disputation known as the *Actus Vespertialis* which took place on the 30th of July. On the following day the president was created doctor amid due rejoicings at the college. On this occasion a banquet was given in the college refectory to all the dignitaries of the university and officials of the city, including the collegiate chapters of St. Amatus and St. Peter. The governor of the city, Count d'Estain, attended in state. The corridors were decorated with suitable inscriptions and a very stately scene must have resulted. On the following day there was a second banquet given by the president to all in the college including a few English visitors.

This chorus of congratulation and rejoicing at the president's new dignity was, however, soon interrupted in a very unpleasant fashion. Before the month of August was out news arrived that serious allegations against Dr. Witham's govern-

<sup>1</sup> *Summa Theologica*, 2, 2, Q. 1, a. 10.



ment were being made in influential quarters. The source of these complaints was a priest named Lawrence Breers, who was a former student<sup>1</sup> and who till the previous March had been a member of the staff. Breers, whose previous career on the English Mission had been marked by difficulties wherever he had been stationed, was a moody, quarrelsome and eccentric man, both physically and mentally weak. Dr. Witham had allowed him to return to the college as one of the confessors, against the advice of those who knew the restless character of the man; but he soon wearied of college life, and the president gladly gave him permission to resign his office and return to England. Shortly after his arrival in London he addressed a letter to the London agent of the college, the Rev. Thomas Day, stating that owing to the weakness and incapacity of the president, whom he represented as over-indulgent to all under him, the entire discipline of the college had become relaxed, and that there remained neither piety nor learning, while the ecclesiastical spirit had almost vanished. The professors, especially the procurator, and Mr. Scot, the prefect, were described as altogether unfit for their work, while the students were stated to be ignorant and rough. Moreover almost all who were in the college, professors and students alike, were, he declared, given to drinking bouts.

This heavy indictment received support from two other quarters; from the historian Dodd, who was offended at Dr. Witham's action in refusing to give an official approbation to one of his books, and from the Abbot Strickland, who was an earnest supporter of the Hanoverian cause and who regarded the English College at Douay as obstinately Jacobite.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Day immediately sent a copy of the letter to the president, who was deeply wounded and alarmed at what he could only consider as a systematic and deliberate campaign of cal-

<sup>1</sup> A volume of Dictates written by him when a student is still preserved in the Douay Room at St. Edmund's College, Old Hall. The "prickly" disposition of Mr. Breers caused his contemporaries to make a play on the word Briars, and Dr. Witham frequently alludes to him in the diary as "Iste Spinosus".

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Strickland, D.D., afterwards Bishop of Namur, was fourth son of Sir Thomas Strickland of Sizergh. He was one of the first Catholics to rally to the Hanoverian dynasty and was on friendly terms with George I. and his ministers. Through Court influence he was, in 1718, made titular Abbot of St. Pierre de Preaux in Normandy, though he was a secular priest and not a monk. He was elected to the See of Namur in 1727 and died there early in 1740.

umny. Shortly after the same charges were sent to the Bishop of Arras; while Abbot Strickland took care that they should reach the Papal Nuncio at Brussels, Monsignor Santini.

The whole attack was completely unexpected, and, as the president himself relates, it came at a time when he was congratulating himself on the good results of his four years' rule; —the college free from debt, staffed by capable and earnest masters, and filled with students who gave every sign of piety and devotion to their studies. That he had enemies, he knew; his attitude towards the Seminary at Paris had aroused considerable resentment, and he was aware that he was held responsible for the Pope's action in forbidding him to send students from Douay to Paris for their philosophy. It was important to meet the calumnies at once; letters from England showed that not only the vicars apostolic, but also the parents of some of the students had heard of the allegations.

In this critical moment he turned to Challoner and entrusted to him the task of defending the college. This he did on the express ground that against Challoner Mr. Breers had brought no charge, and had even admitted that to his conduct, at least, no possible exception could be taken. Challoner accordingly drew up a letter, which Dr. Witham describes as remarkably able, in which he vindicated the reputation of the president, the procurator and others, showing that the charges of Mr. Breers were absolutely false and without foundation.<sup>1</sup> This letter was addressed to Dr. Simon Rider, Dean of the English Chapter, who had but a short time before made an official visitation of the college lasting for an entire month, and who was in a position to know how groundless were the charges. Two other former professors, Mr. Christmas and Mr. Richard Kendal, who had no reason to favour the president, also gave decided testimony to the falsehood of the statements made by Breers.

Challoner's letter was signed by all the priests in the house who had not been accused, and by every one of the students in theology. It was so convincing in showing that not even one of the charges made was true, that with the other evidence ad-

<sup>1</sup> In the Ushaw Archives, Ushaw MSS., vol. i., 144, there is a paper in Challoner's hand with additions by Dr. Dicconson which appears to be a contemporary copy of this document. See Appendix B.

duced by the president, it was sufficient to crush the calumny. Bishop Giffard, the Vicar Apostolic of the London District, wrote back to say that he regarded the statements of Breers as hallucinations resulting from his melancholy; and before the end of the year Dr. Rider was able to report that the accusations were regarded by all as false and that they had done no harm to any one except to Breers himself. Even Dodd, while still maintaining that Dr. Witham was unsuitable as president, admitted that the charges of Breers were worthless. Finally, the Nuncio, when the president offered his defence, remarked that if the accusations had entered one ear they had gone out of the other; and the Bishop of Arras wrote very kindly, renewing requisite faculties, and thus showing that he attached no weight to the allegations that had been made.<sup>1</sup>

Once more in the same year Challoner was called on to defend the president from a false accusation. This was in October, 1719, when the restless Abbot Strickland, ever engaged in political intrigue, had complained to the Papal Nuncio at Brussels that Dr. Witham had libelled him in the college diary. He supported the charge by one genuine extract from the diary which had been surreptitiously obtained and two other passages which purported to be *verbatim* Latin translations of two English passages. It was easily shown that as the whole diary was written in Latin there were no such English passages to be translated, and that the alleged extracts were mere forgeries. The Nuncio accepted the testimony of Challoner, supported as it was by that of Mr. Brockholes and Mr. Bulmer, two other priests of the college, and declared himself fully satisfied.

Towards the end of the year great anxiety was felt as to the college funds which were in danger of suffering through the reduction of interest which the French Government had effected and the vice-president was sent to Paris to see what could be done. There was much talk, too, of immense profits to be gained by those who invested in the Mississippi scheme of the notorious financier Law. Mr. Dicconson was to ex-

<sup>1</sup> A full account of the whole incident was written by Dr. Witham in the College Diary as an Appendix to the year 1719. There is also a long letter written by him to an unnamed correspondent, possibly the agent at Rome, in the Westminster Archives—"Douay Papers."

amine into this too, and, if he thought well, to invest some of the college money in it. Unfortunately Mr. Dicconson's well-meant efforts failed to avert disaster, and Dr. Witham had to face what he himself described as "the greatest loss that ever had happened to Douay College, *i.e.* the ruin of almost all our Foundations or Funds that we had placed in the Town-house of Paris, either by Paper-money or the unfortunate actions of the Mississippi".<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Dicconson was absent for many months and was not able to return to Douay till 10th July, 1720, and even then he did not resume his work at the college but, having resigned the office of vice-president, returned to England in August, when he became grand-vicar to Bishop Stonor and finally Vicar Apostolic of the Northern District.

Dr. Witham had now to find both a vice-president and a professor of theology. Without hesitation or delay he appointed Challoner to both offices. That he should become professor of theology was almost a foregone conclusion, but that he should be chosen as vice-president when he had only been a priest for four years, and had not yet reached his thirtieth birthday, shows in the most emphatic manner the esteem in which he was held.

The office of vice-president was a very important one, as it carried with it many onerous duties besides the responsibility of governing the college whenever the president was absent. The vice-president was specially charged with the duty of seeing that the Constitutions and rules were obeyed by all, both priests and students, and that all offices in the house were properly discharged. The spiritual care of the students was also entrusted to him,—an office quite after Challoner's own heart, especially as we are told that a great proportion of the members of the college had chosen him as their confessor.<sup>2</sup> The Constitutions required him to take special pains to preserve charity and mutual goodwill in the college, and to foster obedience to and reverence for the president. He also had special care of the sick and was to provide both for their corporal and spiritual wants. He was to keep an inventory

<sup>1</sup> *Revertimini ad Judicium*, MS. by Dr. Witham dated 20th Oct., 1736. Oscott MSS., Stonor Papers, fol. 336.

<sup>2</sup> Butler's "Life of Challoner," *Cath. Mag.*, p. 647.



of all the movable property belonging to the college and employed by the various officials and was to check this at stated times. In this connection he had to point out to the procurator if anything were needed or if there was waste or deterioration of property going on. Finally he had jurisdiction over every matter which did not fall within the province of any other official.

To enable him to carry out these duties he had a right to the assistance of one of the priests, whom he could depute to visit the sacristy, infirmary, and the rooms of all students and even those of the priests on his behalf. In the absence of the president he had full power to command and to do whatever the president could command or do, unless the latter had expressly limited his power.

It is little wonder therefore that Barnard should write:<sup>1</sup> "This Office of Vice-President could not fail of being, at least in some degree, contrary to Mr. Challoner's inclinations, and afford him some distractions with regard to that internal recollection of soul which he always endeavoured to cultivate and preserve". Charles Butler adds that in addition to the duties of his office, which he observes was "by no means congenial with his temper or inclination," he had many penitents in the town particularly among the Irish soldiers then in the army of the King of France and at that time part of the garrison of Douay. To these Irish soldiers he devoted the time which would otherwise have been spent in recreation, and when he needed exercise he obtained it by walking to their quarters where he went in and out among them, visiting those in hospital, and helping all so far as he was able. Barnard gives a summary of a sermon which he preached to them one St. Patrick's Day on the words of Our Lord, "If ye be the children of Abraham, do the works of Abraham".

But though the duties of vice-president were so important, those of the professor of theology were hardly less so; for the teaching of theology was regarded by the Constitutions as the most important and vital part of the college course, and as the point to which all other studies either in humanities or in philosophy were to lead. In the forefront of the instructions given was the direction to avoid all novel opinions and to

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Bishop Challoner*, p. 24.



follow very faithfully the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas. The treatises were arranged according to the Constitutions so as to cover a course of four years. Two lectures were to be given each day, in which the method of "Dictates," already described, was to be followed. In addition to these one hour had to be devoted daily to the practice of disputation, and this was extended to an hour and a half when formal repetitions were held in the presence of the president and the seniors. Special regard was to be had to the peculiar circumstances of England, so that besides the usual speculative knowledge of theology, much stress was laid on the practical importance of controversy and cases of conscience.

From time to time inquiry was made by the Pope as to whether these Constitutions were being faithfully observed. In the detailed answers furnished some years later to one of these inquiries—the "Quæsitæ" of 1741<sup>1</sup>—Dr. Thornburgh, then president, one of Challoner's former students, gives an account of the theological studies which applies equally well to the earlier period, when he was himself a student attending Challoner's lectures.

"The whole scope and object of our course of studies is that each Pontifical student, when the time comes for undertaking his pastoral duties in England, shall be thoroughly prepared for the task. . . . In every course of Theology that is given here, one of the two Professors spends an entire year in the discussion of these controversies, while the other employs the same amount of time in the solution of cases of conscience; and this in addition to the treatment of each of those subjects which occurs in the Treatises on the Sacraments, on Human Acts, on Sin, Grace, Justification, Merit, and the other Treatises which are usually read by students of Theology. The Superiors of the College, moreover, are fully persuaded that the Christian commonwealth finds the greatest benefit from a frequent and worthy preaching of the Word of God, and that innumerable evils have resulted from its neglect. Hence they strive with all the means in their power that each Alumnus should devote serious thought to the Apostolic duty of preaching, should practise it and make it a special object of his prayer, that he may be powerful in word and work, preaching sound

<sup>1</sup> Edited by Rev. Edwin Bonney, *Ushaw Magazine*, March, 1904, xiv., 18 sqq.

doctrine, and always suitably prepared to refute by word and example those who assail the truth."

In the year 1721 Challoner was again put forward to champion the cause of the college. The matter in dispute was the right of the professors to offer themselves as candidates for chairs in the University of Douay. This right had formerly—and indeed recently—been allowed, for in 1702 Dr. Hawarden had been admitted to the *conkursus* for the chair of "Catechism".<sup>1</sup> Four years later, however, when Mr. Cuthbert Perkinson came forward as candidate for the Greek professorship he was excluded, and from that time the right of the priests of the English College to present themselves for the *conkursus* had been denied.

The objections taken were, first, that the priests of the college, like the Jesuits and Oratorians, held all their property in common, and were therefore in the position of *quasi* Regulars and so disqualified: secondly, that they were aliens: thirdly, that they were bound by oath to return to the English mission when required and that this would result in the university suffering detriment in being suddenly deprived of its professors. These objections were easily answered. The first was untrue; the second was of no force, because some of the existing professors, including Dr. Delcourt, the chief opponent of the English College, were not naturalised Frenchmen; the third was questioned on the ground that not all the English priests were bound by the Mission Oath, and even if they had been, no real loss would result therefrom to the university.

Dr. Witham and the other English priests were anxious to reassert the ancient right, and an opportunity occurred in June, 1721, when the catechetical chair fell vacant and a *conkursus* for the appointment of a new professor was duly announced. The English College put forward Challoner as a candidate. The campaign was opened by a memorandum presented by the procurator in the name of the college to the provisors of the university. Some of the provisors were impressed, and on the 16th the college issued a formal protest against a *conkursus* being held from which the English priests were excluded. In

<sup>1</sup> This professorship, which was technically known as "la chaire royal du catéchisme," would seem to have been the chair of *Positive*, as distinguished from *Polemic* or *Scholastic* Theology.

consequence of this, letters were written both by the university and the college to the French Court.

In the meantime the *conkursus* was appointed to take place on the 30th of June. On that day Challoner duly presented himself as a candidate. The only other candidate was a licentiate in theology named Farazin, who was a canon of St. Amé. Dr. Delcourt immediately raised the objection that Englishmen who were members of the English College were inadmissible by reason of former resolutions of the university. He then left the assembly together with Dr. de Marc, his colleague. As these doctors were the usual judges of the eligibility of candidates their objection was a matter of some weight, but after discussion the provisors and the king's commissary decided to allow Challoner to take part in the *conkursus*, and they summoned the recalcitrant doctors to another meeting on the following day, with the express declaration that if they did not attend their absence would be considered tantamount to a refusal to act as judges, and fresh judges would be appointed in their stead.

On the 1st of July the adjourned meeting was held, and as both the doctors were still absent new judges were appointed. There then appeared a third candidate in the person of an aged professor named Lengrand, who had taught philosophy for nearly forty years in the College Royal. Canon Farazin objected to his being admitted on the ground of his late arrival. The judges thereupon asked Challoner whether he consented or not to M. Lengrand's admission, to which he replied that as he did not know what the custom was he left it to the decision of the judges. This difficulty coming in addition to the contest of the previous day decided the provisors to break off the *conkursus* and write to Court for instructions. The president of the English College also sent a memorial, but before either letter could reach Paris, instructions were received from the king's chancellor that the whole question of the rights of the English College with regard to the *conkursus* was to be referred to the governor of the province that he might inquire into it. The governor was then in residence at Lille, and thither Mr. Brockholes, the college procurator, journeyed with evidence in support of the cause. He left Douay on the 5th of July, and two months later the decision was given entirely in his favour. On

the 6th of September the governor addressed a letter to the provisors requiring them to admit priests of the English College as candidates for the *concursus*. This decision was accepted as final by the University, and 20th October was fixed as the date of the new *concursus*.

When the day arrived there was more trouble. Dr. Delcourt and Dr. de Marc, having refused to act as judges, had been replaced by other officials, but they both now claimed to act on the ground that they had accepted the royal mandate. On the following day they were admitted to act as judges. The third candidate had now withdrawn, but his place was filled by another, one M. Motquin, who chanced to be a relative of Dr. Delcourt.

On the 22nd of October Challoner protested against Dr. Delcourt and Dr. de Marc acting as judges on the ground that their past action showed hostile bias. Two days later the provisors excluded Dr. Delcourt, but this was probably on account of his relationship to the third candidate, for on the same day M. Motquin withdrew from the contest. Apparently Dr. Delcourt was thereupon reinstated, because on the 27th of October Challoner again lodged a formal protestation against him and Dr. de Marc, at the same time stating that he did not desire to stop the *concursus* on that account. In the event neither acted as judge.

Careful account of the proceedings was kept by Mr. Brockholes, the procurator, in his diary, an extract from which relating to this matter has been preserved in the Westminster Archives.<sup>1</sup> It begins by an account of Farazin's opening on the 27th of October, when "he began to dictate on ye Millenary Heresy, which he continued ye 29 & 31 of ye same month". Mr. Brockholes was too thorough a partisan to allow himself to be much impressed, and considered that "he jumbled the question about this heresy and John XXII.'s mistakes together". He also notes that "He hammer'd most mightly the first time he gave explications, but not so much afterwards".

He then describes how on "ye 4th, 6th and 8th of Nov. Mr. Challoner dictated on the Sacrament of Extreme Unction with an universal applause both as to his dissertation and explications, both which Mr. Amand, one of ye Judges is said to

<sup>1</sup>"Continuation of Mr. Brock: his Journal as to w<sup>t</sup> regards ye Concourse." To this the date 1721 has been added, apparently in Challoner's own writing.



have praised publicly". On Challoner's first appearance he found on entering the pulpit that matter of an insulting nature had been placed there. "The Provisours," adds Mr. Brockholes " (who were some of them allways present at these explications) seem'd very angry att y<sup>s</sup> beastly affront, tho' Mark excused it as a thing y<sup>t</sup> had happen'd to himself the year before in the higher pulpit."

But the brunt of the battle lay in the disputations which were conducted when the dissertations had been disposed of. It will be well to quote Mr. Brockholes's account of the proceedings of the first day in full.

"On the 8th of Nov. the two Concurrants drew the matter for their disputes and on the 10th Pharazin began with a These on *Scientia, Voluntas et Providentia Dei*, out of which Mr. Challoner chose to dispute on, 1. *Libertas Dei*. 2. *Voluntas animas salvandi omnes*. 3. The facts about the Monastery of Adrumetum in which Pharazin held there were Predestinations & 4. *Scientia Media*. In the 1st, 3rd and 4th argument Mr. Challoner evidently confounded his Antagonist and severall think the same as to the 2nd which Mark took out of Mr. Challoner's mouth when I thought the difficulty began to press close. He did the same to the end of the first argument. All which Mr. Challoner bore very patiently, but ye Provisours at the end of the disputes signified to Mark that they did not like his taking up the cudgels &c. which he excused by saying that Mr. Challoner did not press his difficulty. Whereas I am sure that when he had undertaken it he proposed nothing the least to the purpose, and Mr. Challoner complained of the first argument being taken from him when it pressed most. Mr. Pharazin defended better than anyone thought he would do, though he gave no answers. He repeated well and distinguished often, though after the same manner and never explicated anything in his solutions. Mr. Challoner had no fault, but that of being *trop doux*. Pharazin received his matters for the second these as he went out of the pulpitt."

The discussions on the second and third day were continued much in the same strain, and with the close of the third day the extract ends. We have, therefore, no account of Challoner's defence of his own thesis, which took place on the 17th, 19th, and 22nd of November,



Finally on the 4th of December judgment was pronounced by two judges, Dr. Amand and Dr. du Bois, awarding the chair to Farazin. The decision evoked considerable dissatisfaction among the professors who had been present, and Challoner immediately lodged an appeal before the Chancellor of France.

Here the matter rested, so far as definite results were concerned, though the litigation dragged on for some time. The whole episode was particularly trying, because during a considerable part of the time it lasted the president was absent in England, and Challoner as vice-president had the entire government of the college in his hands from August till December, as well as the extra work involved in giving theological lectures in place of the president. The sequel of the contest is not narrated in the diary itself; but on a sheet of paper inserted later in the volume is the beginning of a MS. "Life of Richard Challoner" of which only one page has been preserved. In this fragment fresh light is thrown upon the matter, for having observed that both his judges and his opponent had been bred in Molinist schools and were devoted to Molinist principles, the writer continues: "Mr. Challoner appealed from their judgment by order of the President, and all the Thomistical professors of divinity out of every order and seminary gave joint testimonies in favour of Mr. Challoner and declared him by many degrees an abler theologian than his antagonist. During the concourse great indignities were shown to Mr. Challoner, which he with an uncommon meekness and patience bore without complaint. Mr. Challoner's antagonist was, without any examination about the merits of the appeal, and without any letters patent, permitted to teach in the public schools, that the vacancy of the chair might not be a prejudice to the university scholars, and continued to enjoy it in that manner, Mr. Challoner ceasing to prosecute or urge his appeal."<sup>1</sup>

The president returned from England just before Christmas and during the coming year both he and his vice-president had much to occupy their minds besides the pending appeal. For Dr. Witham had decided on undertaking a task of great

<sup>1</sup> The original draft of the Appeal is in the Westminster Archives, "Douay Papers". Another document in the Archives, which will be found in Appendix C, shows that the suit was still pending in November, 1723.

magnitude,—nothing less than the rebuilding of the entire college as well as the chapel.<sup>1</sup> This had become absolutely necessary, for the lapse of a hundred years and the damage done in the two sieges had left the buildings in a very dilapidated state. Dr. Witham, writing in 1736, speaks of the expenses he had been put to in carrying out “the reparations necessary to be made to the old and decayed College, part of which was ready to fall upon our heads with every great wind and storm”.

At length he concluded that repairing such a building was throwing money away and that it would be best to pull it all down and rebuild it afresh. The difficulties in the way were not light. A large sum of money had to be collected from friends and benefactors in England; arrangements had to be made for carrying on the work of the college during rebuilding; and there was a certain amount of actual opposition to be met. The procurator, Mr. Brockholes, for instance, took a line of action which nearly ended the whole scheme. He strongly disapproved of an arrangement the president had made with Earl Rivers, himself a Catholic priest,<sup>2</sup> by which the earl was to give the college £2,000 in consideration of receiving an annuity of £200 a year. Dr. Witham had expected that Challoner and Brockholes as vice-president and procurator respectively would join with him as security for the payment of the annuity. Challoner was willing, but the procurator refused and threatened to resign. Under the circumstances the president wrote to Lord Rivers to say that as he could not offer the security originally promised he must withdraw from the proposed arrangement. This annoyed the earl, who replied that he would release the president, but would never give a penny to the college either during life or by will.

<sup>1</sup> The ancient buildings were now well over a century old. The foundation-stone of the chapel, which bore the date 1602, had been laid on the 15th of May of that year by President Worthington. In the following February he, Dr. Harrison and Mr. Law, the procurator, laid three foundation-stones for the choir, and on the 7th of July High Mass was celebrated in the completed building. In the meantime work had been begun on the western side of the college and the erection of the quadrangle proceeded apace, the refectory being used for the first time on Christmas Day, 1603.

<sup>2</sup> John Savage, fifth Earl Rivers, Viscount Savage, and Viscount Colchester was grandson of John, second earl. He succeeded Richard the fourth earl in 1712.

When this was known in London it led to further trouble. Bishop Giffard, who had himself promised to provide £1,000 if the building was undertaken forthwith, was vexed at the procurator's action. The London agent of the college wrote at once to Lord Rivers, begging him to carry out the arrangement that had been come to with the president, notwithstanding the procurator's opposition. Dr. Giffard furthermore sent a letter to the president desiring him without loss of time to carry out the contract. Mr. Brockholes, however, remained obstinate, so the requisite security could not be offered.

It was not till April that matters could be settled; but finally the bishop succeeded in carrying the matter through, and the contract between the president and Lord Rivers was signed. Towards the end of the following month a contract was signed with an architect named Antoine Joseph Wattelin for the rebuilding of the main block of the college at a cost of 40,000 florins, a sum which Dr. Witham estimated as being equivalent to £4,000, but which would represent a far larger sum at present value. This, however, did not include the chapel, for which a second contract was signed on the 31st of August. This was to cost 34,500 florins, but as the president had decided not to sign the contracts with the architect until he had the requisite money in hand, it is clear that he must have collected a large sum in addition to what he had received from Earl Rivers and Bishop Giffard.

The rest of the year was occupied in preparing plans and making preparations, so that it was not till January, 1723, that the work of demolishing the front of the old college and the chapel was begun. The theological lecture-room was turned into a temporary oratory and the lectures were delivered in the refectory. Early in February the old foundation-stone of the chapel was dug up and a new one prepared with the inscription:—

D. O. M. B. M. V. ET S. Thom. CANT. M.  
 BONAV. GIFFARD. EPUS. MADAUR.  
 R. WITHAM PRAESES AN. 1723.  
 A FUND. COLLEG. AN. 155  
 ARCHYTECT. A. J. WATELIN.



THE ENGLISH COLLEGE AT DOUAY, AS REBUILT BY DR. WITHAM.





This stone was laid on the 9th of February by Dean Febure, representing the Bishop of Arras. The president, and all the professors and students were present, and the rites prescribed by the *Rituale Romanum* duly observed.<sup>1</sup>

The building operations continued during the whole of 1723, the work of the college being carried on in the remaining portions of the old quadrangle. At length, by January, 1724, the new building was complete. It covered the same ground as before and the chapel was rebuilt on the original site, but the new front was loftier in elevation and the work was so sound that it remains to-day as substantial as ever, though it has served as a college for the greater part of one century and has been occupied as barracks for most of another.

The other three sides of the old quadrangle remained, though the architect prepared plans for rebuilding them; but this work was not executed for some years to come, and when it was undertaken only the lateral wings were rebuilt and, as has been said, the fourth side was left open for gardens and recreation-grounds.

On the 17th of May, 1724, the new dormitory and private rooms were first used by the students, and probably at the same time Challoner took possession of the vice-president's rooms on the first floor to the left of the main entrance. The president occupied the corresponding rooms on the right. Three months later a case of small-pox occurred, and most of the students were hurried away to La Croix, the country-house, accompanied by the president. Challoner remained behind with those who had been in danger of infection, but fortunately the outbreak did not spread and by September all returned.

The 1st of October brought with it the beginning of the first scholastic year in the new college, and on the feast of St. Teresa (15th October) the rebuilt chapel was blessed by the vicar-general, M. Tellier. This ceremony brought to a successful end the long and trying transition from the old college; and the tranquil orderly life was resumed within the new walls, not to be interrupted until that evening in May, 1790, when the revolutionary mob rushed in tumult through the quiet rooms

<sup>1</sup> The stone was laid in the south-east corner of the sanctuary, behind the high altar.

and corridors, performing that strange "new pyrrhic dance of drunken carmagmols in uniform, hand in hand with college boys in cassocks".<sup>1</sup>

With the opening of the new buildings a quieter time both for the college and the president began. Dr. Witham had his minor troubles to bear, but his greater difficulties were now surmounted. He gradually overcame the suspicion with which his government was regarded, especially in the North of England, and he lived down much of the misrepresentation that had arisen. He no longer offered to resign his office, as he had so frequently done during the first years of his presidency, and his diary is devoted almost entirely to matters of routine. Arrivals and departures, ordinations and disputations, class-lists and festivals are all duly chronicled; but lengthy personal explanations no longer appear. Occasionally we read of the doings of the "serenissimus rex Angliæ," and his exiled Court, of the queen and her sons, the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York; while one line is devoted to recording the death of "Georgius primus dictus Angliæ rex". Even the consecration of the obnoxious Abbot Strickland as Bishop of Namur calls forth no personal expression of opinion. Clearly in the history of the college the years between 1725 and 1730 were singularly barren of incident.

From Challoner's point of view this was entire gain, and he was enabled to devote himself to his duties with the quiet regularity that he loved. So close must be the bond between president and vice-president, that all Dr. Witham's previous anxieties had reacted on his own work. Moreover the president's frequent resignations, offered sometimes to the English bishops and at other times to Propaganda, rendered his own future very uncertain. Then there were long periods of waiting until the answer—always in the negative—arrived. Now, after many false alarms, he found himself in something like a permanent state.

In 1727 the doctorate was conferred upon him. On the 24th of May he held the *Vesperiae* at which Dr. Witham made a speech in his honour. On the 27th of the same month he was created doctor of divinity in the university, an honour

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Joseph Hodgson, "The Seizure of Douay College," *Catholic Magazine*, 1831.

# De Veritate Religionis Christianæ & Catholicæ. Q. T H E O L O G I C A

Sine Ecclesia Catholica Romana vera Christi Ecclesia, necne?

PROPOSITIONES

In solo posuit Tabernaculum suum.

Testimonia sua credibilia facta sunt nimis.

Non potest Civitas abscondi supra montem posita.

Pl. 18. v. 6.

Pl. 72. v. 5.

Matth. 13. v. 14.

## CONCLUSIO PRIMA.

**V**ERÆ Religionis hæc sunt *Athei, Drisæ, Pagani, Mahometani, Judæi, Hæretici, & Schismatici*, contra hos omnes veram & Catholicam Religionem evidentè credibilem esse, varia probant Argumenta, & ut vocant, *credibilitatis motiva* Bæntismum Dei contra *Atheos*, multis argumentis probat Philosophus Christianus; Illo maxime quod ex mundi hujus contemplatione deducitur. Non tamen æquum cum *Correio* affirmare existentiam Dei ex ipsius *idea* posse demonstrari. Eadem mundi hujus contemplatio *materiam spinosam* Deum explodit, qui ipsum *in mundum* Deum esse somniavit. Ipsum enim *Universum*, & omnia quæ in eo sunt, nobis uti vice proclamant. *Ipsi fecit nos, & non ipsi nos*, Struëbæus ergo *Epicturus* & quotquot cum eo, mundum hunc ex sortuito atonorum concursu coalescere potuisse crediderunt.

SECUNDA.

**D**EUm quem naturæ Duce existere cognoscimus, eodem naturæ Duce eundem esse facili Ratiocinatione cognoscimus. At quo modo, quibus sacris Ritibus colendus sit, quibus virtutibus supernaturalibus promerendus, ipse dignatus est *Revelare* prius quidem per sanctos Homines, Patriarchas & Prophetas; deinde per unigenitum Filium suum, itaque *Revelare* Religionem contra *Drisæ*, quos non ita pridem infensum evomuit, verè existeret, eandem olim jam ais divinitus offensam fuisse per Moysen; nunc Christianis traditam per Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum, multa evincunt, 1. *Miracula* divinx veritatis sigilla, quæ vel à Moysè & Prophetis, vel à Christo & Apostolis, vel denique ab aliis Sanctis visis in *Revelatæ* Religionis confirmationem impenduntur eductura; Quæ & coram maximè pietumque hominum multitudine sunt facta; & eo ipso tempore litteris nominè tique commendata, quos, si sicla fuerit, manifestè importatur à quovis convinci potuissent. 2. Prophetarum vaticinia, & rerum prædictarum eventus, maxime earum quæ de Christo & Ecclesiâ prænuuntia sunt. 3. Mundi conversio, & admirabilis Christianæ fidei propagatio. Talem enim doctrinam judicio & voluptatibus hominum addè contrariam, addè intolerabilem, addè incredibilem, nulli Imperatorum potentia sussultam, nullis militum Armis munitam, nullis nobilibus hujus sæculi aut Potentium virorum opibus defensam, nullis denique Philosophorum aut Oratorum ingenii commendatam, à Paucis, Ignotis, Sægentibus & Imperitis Piscatoribus, tam brevi tempore addè dilatare potuisse, ut orbem penè universum impleret, fœrentibus, impugnantibus, pœti quantislibet ubique Imperatoribus, Regibus, Magistratibus, Populis, Legibus, testium tamque illud miraculum est, ut vel incredulos exclamare cogat *dignus Dei est* haec argumentis alicui Ecclesiæ Christi stabilitatem qui per tria jam annos de tot hostibus triumphavit. Adde Martyrum a ultitudine & constantiam; Periculatorum insulam plenumque exitum; de Christianis satelitum, morisque in plurimis Ecclesiis Filios de Christianis consentaneos, plerumque admirabiles ipsius scripturæ sacræ in ætatem & sublimitatem &c. Hæc adeo argumenta etiam *Paganos & Mahometanos* redarguunt. Quorum placita faciè est aliunde falsitas, & absurditatis convincere.

TERTIA.

**M**ESSIAM Judæis olim promissum jampridem venisse probat *Jacob* morientis vaticinium Gen. 49. probant septuaginta Danielis hebdomadæ: Agei quæque & Malachie vaticinia: Eumque fuisse *Jesum Mariæ Filium*, tum Prophetarum Oracula quibus singulas fœræ vitæ mortisque ejus circumstantias prænuuntiant, tum reliqua argumenta supra recensita demonstrant. Et certè quam aliam ob causam, nisi ob repudiatum Messiam de tot calamitatibus afflictos per mille sæculos jam & amplius annos à præmissâ terrâ extores, omnino odiosos, exules agere cogerent Judæi? cum apud omnes conflet eos nunquam antè vel ab Idololatriæ regis alienos fuisse, vel magis legis zelatores, quam jam fuisse, & jam pridem fuerint. Veram Christi Ecclesiam contra *Hæreticos & Schismaticos* ea quæ notis & prophetatibus demonstrantur. Ell enim vera Christi Ecclesia, 1. Una unitate capitis visibilis & membrorum inter se, 2. sancta tam doctrinæ magisteriis, quam morum exemplis, 3. Catholica id est universalis, universalitate loci & temporis, 4. Apostolica continua successione Pastorum, Communionis, Doctrinæ, ab Apostolis derivatæ. His addit 5. *aug. 1. contra Epistol. fund. c. 4.* Auctoritatem *miraculis* incheatam, spe nutrium, charitate auctam, veritate firmatam: Conlenitionem populo rum atque gentium: Communionem sedis Apostolicæ, & Catholicum nomen. Quæ tamen ad priores illas quatuor Ecclesiæ proprietates revocari possunt. His veluti notis & characteribus Ecclesiæ Romanæ id est communicans cum Pontifice Romano vera esse Christi Ecclesia denonstratur; reliquæ omnes Christianorum sectæ, sævæ synagoge esse convincuntur. Quanto magis qui de falso nomine *Reformatus* vocatur, quorum sive primos auctores & Antesignanos ipse, & eorumque mores turpissimos & Degeneratos portenta; sive præteritæ suæ reformationis, motiva, media, successus, R. formatorum inter se dissidia, degenarum incondiantiam, legitimæ missionis vocationisque defectum, aliæque adjuncta consideres; placet omnino Christiano nomine indigna repetes, illo vero ipso digna, quem magistram *Lutherus* in abrogandis mitis le secutum fuisse dissimulare non potuit, 1. de *missâ petra* & vult. *Jacob. 2. 7. Ecce Vitiæ.*

Probat in *Uesperis Aula sue Doctoralis.*

Rever. ac Brud. Dom. RICHARDUS CHALLONER Anglus Die 24. Maii 1757. horâ secundâ pomer.

DUA CI Typis P. SARAZIN. Academiæ Regiæ Typographi Cum Privilegio Eximienno Lom.



which, says Dr. Witham, "he had in the opinion of all men long ago deserved".<sup>1</sup>

The English college rejoiced greatly. Barnard has preserved long extracts from the congratulatory ode, offered to the new doctor, which it is kinder to leave in the obscurity of his pages, though the verses are not conspicuously worse than those of the Reverend Laurence Eusden, at that time poet-laureate of England. It would be unfair to take a complimentary offering of this kind as a testimony to character, though we may easily believe in the literal truth, if not the poetry, of such lines as :—

Tho' deeply learn'd you make no pompous show,

or

To all you're easy, to yourself severe.

But there is one note struck which shows that Challoner was already longing for a more arduous, if less dignified, field of work ; and in the verses apprehension is clearly expressed

Lest, all compleated, you should now desire  
Mov'd by a glowing zeal hence to retire,

and the writer continues :—

Oh ! with your presence bless us yet ! Oh, stay,  
And to perfection show us still the way !  
Let Britain want a while your saving hand :  
For its own sake, stay from your native land.  
For howe'er great your pains, or good your heart,  
You there can act but one Apostle's part.  
But here your conduct and instructions breed  
A race of Shepherds fit Christ's flock to feed.

Barnard expressly states that the author of the verses had frequently heard Challoner express his ardent desire of returning to England that he might win souls to the Church ; but his prospects of being allowed the fulfilment of his wish must have seemed to him remote. Like every Douay priest he was bound by oath to stay and serve the college as long as the president should require his services, and Dr. Witham was not likely willingly to resign one who filled so many offices in the house with untiring zeal and acceptance to all. Not even Breers had been able to find fault.

<sup>1</sup> "Lauream doctoralem accepit quam jamdudum omnium opinione et judicio optime meruerat Exim. D. Ricardus Challoner, Theologiæ per sex annos Professor" (Diary, p. 143).



Yet the desire for active work on the mission, which sooner or later comes in some degree to all priests engaged in the work of teaching, was clearly making its persistent call, and Challoner was held to Douay only by the anchor of obedience. But his spirit of self-abnegation lent him patience and for three years more Dr. Witham kept him by his side. The president, however, relieved him at this time of the office of prefect of studies, in which he was succeeded by the Rev. William Thornburgh.

In 1728 Dr. Challoner published his first work. This was the little volume of meditations for every day in the month known as *Think Well On't*. It is the outcome of his own fervent love of God and his desire that all should find in mental prayer the treasury that he himself possessed therein, and thus it is the summary of his spiritual teaching, and the expression of his own inner life. So reticent was he throughout life that he never speaks of his own religious experience, and it is only by studying his spiritual works, especially this little book and the larger volumes of the *Meditations*, that we gain some notion of his hidden intercourse with God—that union in prayer that was so unbroken during his long life of ninety years. “We have within us,” he writes, “the eternal, immense, omnipotent, infinite Lord and Maker of all things; and we are within this infinite being; wherever we are, we have Him with us.”<sup>1</sup> The constant realisation of this presence of God was the secret of his own life. He deliberately cut himself off so far as he could from all the interests of this world that he might devote himself more thoroughly to this intimate union with God. In this his earliest work there are abundant allusions to this passionate desire to give himself entirely to God;—unconscious self-revelation,—as for instance when dwelling on St. John’s saying that “God is love”<sup>2</sup> he breaks forth: “We have this loving and most lovely God always with us; and always in us; why do we not run to His embraces? He is a fire that ever burns; this fire is in the very centre of our souls; how is it that we feel so little of its flames? It is because we will not stand by it. It is because we will not keep our souls at home, attentive to that great guest who resides within us, but let them continually wander abroad upon vain created amusements.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chapter xxiv.<sup>2</sup> 1 John iv.<sup>3</sup> Chapter xxiv.

The chief means of keeping the soul "at home" and in union with God he found in systematic and regular mental prayer. And in this little book he offers guidance to all souls who are beginning to tread the ways of Divine Love. He begins with the words of Jeremias :<sup>1</sup> "With desolation is all the land made desolate, because there is no one that considereth in the heart," and he pleads in the first chapter that the want of consideration on the great truths of Christianity is the chief source of all evils. He then leads us to reflect on the ends for which we are created ; the benefits of God, the happiness of serving God, and similar subjects. Having thus prepared the way, he next passes to the "four last things,"—Death, Judgment, Hell and Heaven ; he delays to consider the evil of mortal sin, the danger of relapse and the need of penance, and having thus led the reader to study himself, he leads him up to God and the consideration of the sufferings and death of Christ.

There is nothing new here. It is the method of all the saints. His aim was to set it out afresh in simple form for men of his own time. He had been trained in a school which distrusted novelties and which loved and revered the old ways. But the message must be repeated to each generation in its own tongue and must be made accessible to all. In *Think Well On't* English Catholics found a book of meditations, short and simple, published in a form which made it easily attainable, and they gave it a warm and lasting welcome. At a time when few Catholic works appeared, and there were scarcely any facilities for the purchase of Catholic books, four editions were called for within twenty years ; and now nearly two centuries after its first appearance, though not so well known as it was even half a century ago, it is still quoted in the lists of Catholic booksellers, and remains a work of practical use.

In June of the same year in which *Think Well On't* was published, Dr. Witham was called to England on business, and for three months the vice-president governed the college. During this period he kept the college diary, two and a half pages of which are covered by his close characteristic writing. Another outbreak of small-pox in July caused him much anxiety : one of the younger boys died, and Dr. Challoner

<sup>1</sup> xii. 11.

took twenty-one of the students with two professors to the country-house, La Croix, where they managed to continue both their studies and the observance of the college rule of life for some weeks. On the 12th of July he himself returned to the college, his place at La Croix being taken by Mr. Petre, the procurator. After four weeks, however, all danger of further infection was considered at an end, and the students at La Croix came back to Douay. The president returned in September and things resumed their normal course.

Two more years passed without incident until the summer of 1730 came, when Dr. Challoner at length obtained his heart's desire and permission to resign his offices at Douay and go to London as a simple missionary priest. For ten years he had been vice-president, professor of theology and confessor. How he wrung reluctant consent from Dr. Witham we do not know; for the whole story of his going we have nothing but the brief record of his departure entered by the president in the college diary in words which form a noble tribute to any man:—

“On the eighteenth of August, set out for London and the English Mission, the Reverend Richard Challoner, here known as Willard, Doctor of Theology and professor thereof for ten years, (who had taught Humanities and Philosophy for five years,) Confessor and Prefect of Studies, a man well versed in every kind of knowledge, endowed with remarkable piety and inflamed with zeal for souls and the love of God and his neighbour.”<sup>1</sup>

When he left, the scholastic year was just finished, the last of the disputations had been held and the vacation had begun. His own work at Douay was now over, his last lecture delivered, the last confession heard. He was succeeded as vice-president by the Rev. Francis Petre and as professor of theology and confessor by the Rev. William Thornburgh, who ten years before had been one of his first pupils. There was nothing left but to pack his books and his papers, celebrate

<sup>1</sup> “Die 18 Augusti in missionem Anglicanam Londinum profectus est Exim. D. Ricardus Challoner, hic Willard, Sac. Theol. Doctor et professor per 10 annos, qui Literas Humaniores et Philosop. per 5 annos docuerat, Confessarius, Praefect. Studiorum, vir in omni Scientiarum genere versatissimus, insigni pietate praeditus, zelo animarum et charitate erga Deum et proximum accensus” (Diary, p. 164).

Mass for the last time within the college chapel and turn his face to England, whither so many of his own students had preceded him.

Old Mr. Laurence Mayes, who was acting as agent in Rome for the affairs of the English Catholics, received in due course Dr. Witham's official report to Propaganda that three more priests had left the English College for the mission. Against the name of Dr. Challoner he wrote, "He is sayd to be one of ye brightest men that was ever bred in Douay College".

## CHAPTER V.

### THE STATE OF ENGLISH CATHOLICS IN 1730.

TOWARDS the end of August or early in September, 1730, Dr. Challoner took up his residence in London, and he lived there with little intermission until his death more than half a century later. It will be to our purpose, then, to form some idea of the new surroundings in which he found himself and amid which the rest of his life was spent.

The position of Catholics socially and politically was going from bad to worse; inasmuch as their hopes of obtaining relief, either by the restoration of the Stuarts or the indulgence of the existing Government, were slowly fading with the lapse of time. Sixteen years had now passed since the accession of the Hanoverian dynasty, and though the Stuarts had not given up all hope of regaining the throne, the steady policy of Walpole was giving the nation that peace and security in which the strength of the House of Brunswick lay.

George II., who had now been king for three years, was an uninteresting personality with no hold on the nation, but loyalty to him meant loyalty to the existing state of things; and the country at large was well content to be ruled in his name by Walpole and Queen Caroline. Their policy was to allow the nation to realise the practical advantages of a settled government. To carry out this aim Walpole's easy if unprincipled political virtue allowed him a wide margin both as to compromise and corruption. It certainly was not an age of high ideals, "when Walpole talked of a man and his price". For twenty years the Prime Minister managed in the teeth of a gradually increasing opposition to have his own way and his policy was in general completely successful. There ensued a time of general comfort, national prosperity and development of trade, though side by side with this there was indeed much sordid misery, as the pages of Smollett show; and the public



and private immorality that had marked the previous reign were in no way abated.

The Church of England, resting after its fierce struggle with Puritanism, was now sunk in somnolent enjoyment of its wealth and dignities, though the English people, not to be satisfied with religion of that type, were again showing signs of restlessness and dissatisfaction. In this very year there was living at Oxford a young resident fellow of Lincoln College whose work was still entirely in the future; but before Chaloner's fifty years of London life had come to a close he had seen Wesley's movement come into being and spread throughout the land.

Unfortunately all these influences worked to the prejudice of Catholics. They had so long considered their cause as bound up with that of the exiled Stuarts, that they were still as a body Jacobite in sympathy, and hoped that the work of the Revolution might yet be undone. In 1714 the Jacobites had nearly succeeded in effecting constitutionally what in 1715 they entirely failed to carry out by force of arms. But these events were too recent to allow the Government to pass by Catholics as altogether beneath notice. Unfortunately this notice took the form, from time to time, of fresh penal legislation. This minor persecution of Catholics was acceptable not only to the Church of England but also to the Dissenters. The Presbyterians of Salter's Hall not only denounced Popery in their pulpits, and elsewhere, but from time to time loudly clamoured for the enforcement of the Penal Code against the Catholics.<sup>1</sup>

That no priest had suffered death since the reign of Charles II. was indeed true, but that the persecution had not ceased even with the vexatious laws of William III. is shown by the statutes of George I. In the first year of his reign we find an act appointing commissioners "to enquire of the estates of certain traitors and popish recusants, and of estates given to superstitious uses, in order to raise money out of their security for the use of the public".<sup>2</sup> As recently as 1723 the statute 9 Geo. I., c. 18, orders £100,000 to be assessed on Catholics

<sup>1</sup> See as an instance Chandler's *Great Britain's Memorial against the Pretender and Popery*, which some years later had a phenomenal sale.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Geo. I., c. 50.

above eighteen years of age over and above the double assessment of land tax to which they were already subjected. There was in this act, it is true, a provision in favour of Catholics should the complete sum be paid, but the principle of the statute showed the mind of the Government, and there was only too much reason to fear that these extortions would be continued to the utter ruin of the laity.

In addition to these financial disabilities the daily life of a Catholic gentleman was beset with harassing restrictions. Cut off entirely from public life, through being debarred from sitting or voting in either House of Parliament,<sup>1</sup> he was narrowly limited in his private life. He was incapable of inheriting land, so that his family estates passed to his Protestant next-of-kin did they choose to dispossess him;<sup>2</sup> he was unable to purchase land<sup>3</sup> but was required to pay double land tax on such real property as he actually did possess;<sup>4</sup> he was forbidden to keep arms<sup>5</sup> and was liable to be deprived of any horse above the value of five pounds.<sup>6</sup> He was incapable of holding any office in the army or navy;<sup>7</sup> or practising as barrister, doctor or schoolmaster.<sup>8</sup> He could not send his children to be educated abroad without a fine;<sup>9</sup> and in order that due check might be kept on him and his property he was bound to register his name and estate under penalty of forfeiture, and to enrol all deeds.<sup>10</sup>

Doubtless some of these laws were rarely put in force, but at any moment they were liable to be brought to bear—and on occasion they *were* brought to bear—on individual Catholics.

And if this was the state of the laity, the condition of the clergy was worse. Their very presence in the country was illegal. The state of the law from 1700 to 1778 was summed up while it was still in force by Lord Chief Justice Mansfield in the case of *The King v. Webb*, in the following terms:—“By the statute of Queen Elizabeth, 27, c. 2, it is High Treason for any man who is proved to be a priest to breathe in this kingdom. Another statute was made afterwards more mild that only imposed a fine and short imprisonment. And a statute

<sup>1</sup> 30 Car. II., 2.

<sup>4</sup> Annual Acts.

<sup>7</sup> 25 Car. II., c. 2.

<sup>9</sup> 11 & 12 W. III., c. 4.

<sup>2</sup> 11 & 12 W. III., c. 4.

<sup>5</sup> 1 W. & M., st. i., c. 15.

<sup>8</sup> 7 & 8 W. III., c. 24, and 12 Anne, st. 2., c. 7.

<sup>10</sup> 1 Geo. I., st. 2, i., c. 55.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

of King William<sup>1</sup> condemns any priest convicted of exercising his functions to perpetual punishment."

It may here be remarked that the statute which was "more mild" did not supersede the statute of Elizabeth, 27, and that the act of William III. was so far from being a dead letter that a priest, John Baptist Malony, was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment, under its provisions, as late as 1767.

During three-quarters of the eighteenth century there was an intermittent application of the penal code which so far kept it from being a dead letter that the constant dread of its enforcement was an ever-present terror, as witness the noble protest written by Joseph Berington in 1780:—

"Shall I sit down satisfied," he wrote, "because the good humour of a magistrate chooses to indulge me; whilst there are laws of which any miscreant has daily power to enforce the execution? My ease, my property and my life are at the disposal of every villain, and I am to be pleased because he is not at this time disposed to deprive me of them. To-morrow his humour may vary, and I shall then be obliged to hide my head in some dark corner or to fly from this land of boasted liberty? It is surely better *not to be* than to live in a state of such anxious and dreadful uncertainty." <sup>2</sup>

When these words were written the First Relief Act of 1778 had already been passed, and there was hope of further concessions, but in 1730 there was not even a distant prospect of relief. The political situation was hostile to Catholics. The unfortunate mistakes of James II. were not yet forgotten, and the abortive attempt of his son in the '15 was still fresh in the mind of the nation. Nor was it a time when disinterested ideals of toleration or equity found ready acceptance. Even a Whig statesman with the party principles of religious liberty behind him was forced to except Catholics from his creed: for though cowed and beaten they were not to be despised, so that not even the toleration that comes from contempt could be afforded them.

From the Government's point of view this policy was not unwise, and in estimating the attitude of ministers towards the

<sup>1</sup> 11 & 12 W. III., c. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *The State and Behaviour of English Catholics, from the Reformation to the Year 1780*, London, 1780, p. viii.

Catholics, who were undoubtedly Jacobite in sympathy, we must not forget that the day was actually to come when in 1745 Prince Charles Edward found himself at Derby with only 120 miles of clear road between his army and London; while King George's Prime Minister sat alone in his house for a whole day, considering whether he had not better be the first minister to declare for the restored House of Stuart and thus be on the winning side betimes; and when that monarch himself had made his preparations for an immediate return to Hanover.<sup>1</sup>

The Catholics of 1730, therefore, so far from expecting relief, would have been grateful for the assurance that no new burden would be laid upon them, and that at the end of the reign of George II. they would be in no worse position, even if in no better one, than at its beginning.

With affairs in this condition it is no wonder if some of them lost heart, if some great families made their peace with King George by abjuring King James, and left the ancient faith on behalf of which they suffered such bondage for the liberty of the Established Church. It was the case with many, some of whom in addition to their freedom were rewarded with honours for the sacrifice of their principles. In the previous century this inducement had been successfully offered both before and after the Revolution. Even dukedoms were not thought too high a recompense. Thus the Marquess of Worcester was created Duke of Beaufort by Charles II. just as the Marquess of Winchester was made Duke of Bolton by William III. The same principle had been acted on in later years, as, for instance, in the case of the very family under whose roof Challoner had spent his earliest years,—the Gages of Firle. Sir William, the seventh baronet, changed his religion after the failure to restore the Stuarts in 1715, and his example was followed by his heir, his cousin Thomas, whose apostasy was rewarded with an Irish peerage in 1720. As Viscount Gage of Castle Island and Baron Gage of Castlebar the latter gentleman could not only claim to have ennobled his own branch of the family, but in due time he succeeded to the English estates of his cousin in Sussex. Thus Firle, which had been for so long a Catholic centre, was lost to us, and though Lord Gage

<sup>1</sup> Lord Mahon's *History of England*, 1713-1783, iii., 275.



is believed to have been reconciled to the Church on his death-bed,<sup>1</sup> his descendants have remained Protestants to this day. What is true of the Gages is the sad history of the Shelleys, Ropers, Gascoignes, Swinburnes and other families, once Catholic.

It had, therefore, become a question not of gaining ground but of maintaining it. The sanguine hopes of a national movement towards the Church, which had been so promising in 1685, had thus faded away even within a life-time. In 1730 the venerable Bishop Giffard, now drawing near his end, still survived after long intervals of persecution and imprisonment to recall vivid memories of that short-lived peace under James II. when the future seemed rich in promise; when the king and queen heard Mass in public, and the papal nuncio appeared at Court with his cross borne before him. In those days priests wore their ecclesiastical dress openly in the streets of London; and Bishop Leyburn had apartments assigned to him in the Royal Palace at Whitehall, and Giffard himself had been consecrated bishop in the banqueting hall there.<sup>2</sup> Now Catholic king and papal nuncio had alike disappeared; bishops and priests were again exposed to the rigour of the penal code; converts were few and apostates more numerous. No hope of forwarding the conversion of England could now be entertained: it were well if the little flock could escape further destruction from without and desertion from within. Therefore it lived in obscurity and needed all its energies even to keep its life within it.

No public or concerted action was possible. All that was open to the most zealous priest was private individual effort on the narrowest scale. Disguised as a layman, he lived obscurely, gathering the faithful round him for a hidden Mass, for surreptitious instruction or the administration of sacraments. Their little meetings were surrounded with all possible precautions. In short, the Church was in the catacombs again, leading its own life in secret, unseen by the world without.

This general review of the political and social position of

<sup>1</sup> Milner, *Life of Dr. Challoner*, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> The banqueting hall was subsequently transformed into a chapel royal and continued to serve this purpose till a few years ago. It is now used as the museum of the Royal United Service Institution.



English Catholics in 1730 will have prepared us for the more detailed study of the London Catholics of that date, upon which we must now enter. And here we must begin by deploring that though materials for the general study of the period are so abundant as to become embarrassing, information as to Catholic life in this same age is of the scantiest and most meagre description. There has been no epoch in the history of the Church in this land about which so little has yet been written as the half-century which followed the Revolution. From 1690 to 1740 there is almost a blank in our annals. After the close of Dodd's great work with the events of 1688 there ensues a dim twilight in which we have only a blurred outline with occasional glimpses, sometimes clear, though more often misty, of men and things. A glance at the pages of Charles Butler's *Historical Memoirs of the English Catholics*, or Joseph Berington's *State and Behaviour of English Catholics from the Reformation to the Year 1780*, will suffice to reveal the barrenness of the land. The only attempt at a general survey that exists is the last-named writer's Supplement to his *Memoirs of Pausani*; but this is chiefly concerned with the difficulties that arose between Seculars and Regulars. And when new light comes, it is due largely to Challoner's own biographers, who in their account of his life from the time of his episcopal consecration in 1741 could not fail to give us some information; though even they hardly attempt to supply a connected account of Catholic affairs.<sup>1</sup>

Nor have later writers been more successful, and the inquirer is therefore thrown back upon the sparse collections of original sources which still exist. The chief of these are the archives of the vicars apostolic, archives necessarily imperfect and hap-

<sup>1</sup> As one instance it may be noted that in Flanagan's *History of the Church in England* the first forty years of the eighteenth century are dealt with in four pages. As to later research, some new isolated facts of value were collected by Father John Morris, *Catholic England in Modern Times* (London, 1892), and by Mr. Murphy in *The Position of the Catholic Church in England and Wales during the Last Two Centuries* (London, 1892), but the scope of both essays was so much wider that sense of proportion alone was sufficient to preclude this period from being treated exhaustively. Dr. Mazière Brady's collections are of course of the highest value, and Mr. Gillow's *Bibliographical Dictionary*, here, as always, is indispensable. The recent publication of Kirk's *Biographies of Eighteenth Century Catholics* (London, 1909) has also made fresh information accessible to the student.

hazard. Indeed, considering the difficulties under which they were preserved, we may be grateful that anything whatever has survived.

With these materials, then, so abundant on the one side, so scanty on the other, we enter on our task of picturing to ourselves the London of George II., and, so far as is possible, the conditions of the little band of Catholics among whom Dr. Challoner was to labour first as priest and then as bishop. We could not gain a true idea of their circumstances without understanding something of the wider national life from which they were so ostracised, but the more closely we study the age the more clearly shall we realise how completely Catholics were cut off from the everyday life around them. We shall see that they were isolated, not only by their legal and political disabilities, but even more thoroughly by the essential antagonism between the ideals, the principles and the practice of even an average Catholic and those of the London of George II.

It was a city very different in most respects from that which we know to-day, yet it is strangely familiar to us. For the London which Challoner knew from 1730 to 1780 is the London of Hogarth, of Horace Walpole and of Dr. Johnson. The genius of Hogarth seized the life that was passing round him and fixed it irrevocably, for us to see, as he saw, the strange mixture of frivolous luxury and squalid misery that London then presented. Nowadays his paintings are regarded by many as painful and unpleasant, because of their frank realism; yet the immorality, coarseness and brutality that are depicted by the painter were chosen by him as the objects of his satire, precisely because they were prominent features of the life of the day. Dr. Challoner, going on his errands of charity and mercy down the mean streets and into the crowded prisons, must have encountered day by day the very sights and scenes, sometimes amusing, sometimes revolting, that fill the works of Hogarth.

For an idea of the life then led by society and the governing classes generally we have only to turn to the bright, and amusing letters of Horace Walpole to realise to what a depth even worldliness had sunk. Under the brilliant life which that keen, if shallow, observer describes, lay a veritable Dance of Death. Beneath the glitter there was neither reality nor belief in any reality. The spirit of the age in high places was

Scepticism. "The eighteenth was a *sceptical* century," wrote Carlyle, "in which little word there is a whole Pandora's box of miseries. Scepticism means not intellectual doubt alone, but moral doubt; all sorts of infidelity, insincerity, spiritual paralysis." Aptly do these three words describe the state of society at the Court of George II.

Yet subsequent history shows that the heart of the nation was sound. A great change was at hand, great deeds were to be accomplished and a great national development was to take place within a few years. The life-work of Samuel Johnson, the appearance of Wesley and the rise to power of Pitt were all signs of a new spirit growing up, of a new earnestness both moral and political. From the crowd of indolent Court prelates Joseph Butler was soon to stand forth as the acute apologist of Christian theology, and his famous work, the *Analogy*, was destined not only to influence the coming generation, but later on to leave its impress on men such as Newman and Gladstone. In short, the reaction of the Restoration was at an end. But in 1730 these things were yet in the future, and the ruling classes of England had not read the signs of the times. John Richard Green, describing this period, quotes the saying of Montesquieu about the higher circles of English society: "If one talks of religion every one laughs". He then continues: "Of the prominent statesmen of the time the greater part were unbelievers in any form of Christianity, and distinguished for the grossness and immorality of their lives".

The London of George II. was not as large as one-sixth of the London of to-day, and it is difficult to realise how much smaller a world it was both socially and politically. The City itself, still enclosed by the great stone walls with their massive gates, was the same in extent as now; but instead of being the mere nucleus of an enormous metropolis many times larger than itself, it formed the central section of a town only about three or four times its own size. In a quarter of an hour's walk from any point on the northern boundary of the City the country could be reached. Thus passing up Bishops-gate Street, through Norton Folgate, the traveller would find that with the end of Shoreditch the houses would cease, and he would be on the country road leading to York. Moving

farther west along the north wall until we reach Smithfield, we find there the beginning of the great coach road to Chester and the north-west of England, but having walked up St. John's Street towards Islington we should come to the fields long before reaching the spot now marked by the "Angel".

On reaching the City boundaries the chief main thoroughfare was High Holborn, but very few streets separated it from the country on the north. Where New Oxford Street now is, lay the crowded district of St. Giles, with its narrow alleys running up north to Great Russell Street, which was the end of the town. From the end of Great Russell Street, Tottenham Court Road, then a country-road "with hawthorn hedges," ran through the fields to the old manor from which it gained its name, Tottenham Court, more famed for the celebrated Adam and Eve Tea-gardens. Even Oxford Street, then known as Tyburn Road, had no buildings on its north side, until just about the spot marked now by Oxford Circus, when it became the Oxford Road, and then passed to the south of the little residential quarter called Marylebone, which had arisen during the reign of Queen Anne, and which still bears traces of that epoch in the names of the streets. But even this ceased at Bond Street, and that was practically the western limit of London. On the south of the Oxford Road there were, it is true, a few more streets, but they came to an end before Hyde Park Lane was reached. Close by lay Tyburn, the place of execution, and beyond that all was country with the villages of Edgware and Paddington in the distance. A line drawn from the Edgware Road to Buckingham Palace would fairly if roughly represent the western side of the capital. Kensington was a rural hamlet with the Royal country-house of Kensington Palace, and Chelsea a river-side village with a few fine mansions.<sup>1</sup> St. James's Park, Piccadilly and Pall-Mall were much as we know them, allowing for minor changes, and the Court was then habitually in residence at St. James's Palace. Crossing over the Park to Westminster we should find West-

<sup>1</sup> Several of the localities named had long been in repute as places of excursion. Thus Broome, writing in 1658, says: "When shall we walk to Tottenham Court, or crosse o're the water; or take a coach to Kensington, or Paddington, or to some one or other of the City outleaps, for an afternoon?" (*The New Academy*).



minster Hall and the Abbey surrounded by dingy and mean buildings, while what is now the fine roadway of Whitehall was then King Street. It ran through the Westminster Gate, formerly used as a prison and known as the Gatehouse, which stood by the remains of the Palace of Whitehall. Of this only the banqueting hall and chapel with a few apartments had survived the fire of 1698. On the site of Trafalgar Square there was a labyrinth of courts, yards and winding streets, but the Strand, then as now, was the main approach to the City, into which we should again enter by the gloomy arch of Temple Bar. In this circuit we should have traversed the greater part of London. Towards the east, notably along the river-side, a few streets stretched out towards the country, but Stepney was still a village in the fields and the Whitechapel Road was mainly known as the thoroughfare which led travellers for the continent to Harwich.

South of the river there was Southwark with its five parishes, but it was not large in extent and the population was clustered round the main approaches to London Bridge. St. George's Fields marked the southernmost limits, except along the Kent Road and one or two other thoroughfares where dwelling-houses followed means of locomotion.

Such was the extent of "the largest and most populous city in the whole of Europe"; but words will not do justice to the misery and disorder that seethed within its limits, often in closest proximity to the fashion and wealth of the higher classes.

After night-fall the streets were full of danger to the belated passer-by, and as the work of a priest takes him into all sorts of places at all hours of day and night, it is clear that our missionaries ran many risks in doing their duty. A young foreigner, one Cæsar de Saussure, has left a vivid account of the insecurity of the streets and the violence of the mob whom he describes as "The most cursed brood in existence".<sup>1</sup> "Foot-pads," he tells us, "are met with in towns, especially in and around London. Should they meet any well-dressed person at night at some unfrequented spot, they will collar him, put the

<sup>1</sup> *A Foreign View of England in the reigns of George I. and George II. The letters of Monsieur Cæsar de Saussure to his family.* Translated and edited by Madame van Muyden. London, 1902.



muzzle of a pistol to his throat and threaten to kill him if he makes the slightest movement or calls for help. During that time another rascal will rob the victim of any valuables he may possess. Pickpockets are legion. With extraordinary dexterity they will steal handkerchiefs, snuff-boxes, watches, in short anything they can find in your pockets. Their profession is practised in the streets, in churches, at the play and especially in crowds." It is noteworthy that one of the chief centres of Catholic life—the Sardinian Embassy—was situated in Lincoln's Inn Fields, a part of London specially noted for its dangerous character. The peculiar danger of the Fields lay in their being a resort for bands of desperate adventurers,—a kind of head-quarters for the hordes of half-beggars, half-robbers whom Gay describes in his *Trivia* :—

Where Lincoln's Inn's wide space is railed around  
Cross not with venturous step ; there oft is found  
The lurking thief, who, while the day-light shone,  
Made the walls echo with his begging tone.  
That crutch, which late compassion mov'd, shall wound  
Thy bleeding head, and fell thee to the ground.  
Though thou art tempted by the linkman's call,  
Yet trust him not, along the lonely wall ;  
In the midway he'll quench the flaming brand  
And share the booty with the pilfering band.

It was a peculiarly daring outrage committed soon after Dr. Challoner came to London that led to the closing of the square as a meeting place for these gentry. The victim was no less a person than one of the Judges, Sir Joseph Jekyll, the Master of the Rolls, who had incurred the anger of the populace by the share he took in introducing a bill into Parliament to raise the price of gin and license the retailers. Sir Joseph, who was then seventy years of age, was set on as he was crossing the square, knocked down and trampled on to the great danger of his life. This dastardly attack on one holding so high an office, and who was moreover so personally respected, could not be passed over, and in 1735 the centre of the square was cleared, laid out as a garden, and enclosed with the existing iron railing,—a proceeding which must have been a distinct gain both to the clergy resident at the Embassy and to the many peaceable Catholics who had occasion to frequent it.

We may be pardoned for lingering over Lincoln's Inn

Fields, because the district around, and especially Holborn, was the neighbourhood in which Dr. Challoner was generally to be found and there always had been a sort of Catholic colony there. Holborn itself is peculiarly rich in Catholic associations, even from the time, long before the Reformation, when the Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas, on his one visit to London, trod its stones. Other saints have passed along it and one, St. Hugh of Lincoln, died there. Along its rough ways the martyrs had been drawn from Newgate to Tyburn, and many of the priests whose names are given by the apostate Gee in his list of priests resident in London are mentioned as lodging there in the thick of the persecution. The existence of the large chapel attached to the Sardinian Embassy drew many Catholics to reside close by. Here, accordingly, at a later date much of the fury of the Gordon rioters spent itself.

No doubt the neighbourhood was a convenient one for the Catholic clergy, lying midway as it did between the City where Catholics were to be found among the merchants and well-to-do traders, and the fashionable quarter which lay to the west, and which also contained its proportion of Catholic houses. In after years the vicars apostolic themselves lived there, first in Devonshire Street and then in Castle Street, Holborn, but at this time the bishop was not residing in London itself.

Dr. Giffard, who in 1730 was eighty-eight years of age, had long lived in Stafford House overlooking St. James's Park, but towards the end of his life he removed to the Convent at Hammersmith, where his long and chequered life was drawing to a tranquil close. It is curious to think of this old man still living in the reign of George II. with his traditions of the Civil War, in which his father had been slain fighting for King Charles, his recollections of Douay that extended over three-quarters of a century and the memories of his own varied experiences. He had lived under twelve Popes, he used to say. He was able to remember the Commonwealth and the rule of Cromwell, and even more clearly to recall the Restoration and the long reign of Charles II. He had himself played a prominent part at the Court of James II., been consecrated in the king's own palace, and within two years been sent as a prisoner to Newgate, when the Revolution had placed William and Mary



BISHOP BONAVENTURE GIFFARD.



on the throne. In Newgate he had remained almost two years,—strange contrast to the pleasant habitation at Magdalen College whither the exiled king had sent him as president when he wished to have at least one Catholic college in Oxford. Nor was Newgate his only experience of prison-life. In one, he says, he lay a considerable time with no bed but the floor, and afterwards he was confined in Hertford Jail. Nor had all his troubles come from those without the Church. In later years there were not wanting those who looked on him as superannuated and no longer fit to rule as vicar apostolic. Even against his own will and without his consent a determined effort to be appointed his coadjutor was made by the pushing Abbot Strickland; and when this scheme had been defeated, Bishop Giffard's vigorous younger colleague of the Midland District, Bishop Stonor, had been suspected of designs upon the London Vicariate, and it was believed had taken steps in Rome with a view to being appointed in Dr. Giffard's stead. But these plans had come to nothing, and the old bishop was left to await his end in peace.<sup>1</sup>

His coadjutor was Benjamin Petre, a member of the noble Essex family of that name, a devout and retiring man, whose frequent futile attempts to resign his office had not tended to make Dr. Giffard's position any the easier. He was a man amiable in character, but of colourless personality and was perhaps justified in distrusting his own ability. Yet the clergy and people loved him if only for his holy and simple life.

Such were the leaders of the London Catholics when Dr. Challoner came to take his place among the priests of the capital. The total number of Catholics in the London District, that is to say, in London and the ten counties which formed the Vicariate,<sup>2</sup> was estimated at 25,000, of whom probably 20,000 or thereabouts lived in London itself.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Papers collected by Kirk and used by Tierney show that as early as 1715 Dr. Stonor was desirous of being appointed coadjutor to Bishop Giffard with right of succession, while Abbot Strickland anticipated being made Vicar Apostolic of the Northern District (*Southwark Archives*).

<sup>2</sup> Middlesex, Essex, Surrey, Kent, Sussex, Hampshire, Berkshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Hertfordshire with the islands of Jersey and Guernsey and the Isle of Wight.

<sup>3</sup> See Bishop Petre's Report to Propaganda, 4th July, 1746, Mazière Brady's *Annals of the Catholic Hierarchy*, p. 163. In this report the bishop states that there had been no perceptible change of numbers for the previous thirty years.



But though the number of these Catholics was comparatively small and their disabilities were great, there were some distinguished names among them: Pope, who was not Poet Laureate only because of his faith; Nathaniel Hooke, his friend and the author of the *Roman History*; Dr. Arne, the musician, reputed composer of "Rule Britannia"; the elder Nollekens, the painter, whose better-known son, the sculptor, was born in Soho about this time; while in the law there was the great conveyancer, James Booth.

The London Catholics had one great advantage over their fellows in the provinces. This was access to the embassy chapels, in which the exercise of the Catholic religion was safeguarded by international law. There were at this time six Catholic Powers with embassies in London, to the chapels of which Catholics were admitted for Mass and the Sacraments. The Imperial Embassy was in Hanover Square. Any one going from there to the City, along Oxford Street, would pass on his right the Portuguese Embassy in Golden Square, the French Embassy in Greek Street, Soho, still a fashionable quarter at that time, and the Sardinian Embassy in Lincoln's Inn Fields. The Spanish Ambassador then lived in Ormond Street on the north of Holborn, while away towards the south was the Venetian Embassy, in Suffolk Street, near the Haymarket.

In all these chapels Catholic services could be performed without concealment, and the Catholic Powers did loyal service to the Church by keeping attached to their respective embassies large staffs of English-speaking chaplains for the good of the London Catholics, in addition to the priests of their own nationality who were attached to their retinues.

Besides these there were no recognised places of meeting. Maitland's *History of London*, published in 1739, mentions one solitary "Popish meeting" as existing in Butler's Alley, Grub Street. Another meeting-house, which is the ancestor of the present mission of Moorfields, existed from a very early date in that neighbourhood,—but, for the rest, Catholics met in any convenient garret that could be obtained. Ale-houses were suitable, because people entering these in considerable numbers did not attract the same attention as their assemblage at a private dwelling-house would probably cause. But even these

secret and obscure resorts were often unsafe, and unexpected raids took place, to the danger of the priest and the disturbance of the congregation.

An entry in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for February, 1735, shows how the hand of the law from time to time made itself felt in this way.

"Sunday, 23. About eleven o'clock, the Peace Officers going their rounds to the public-houses, to prevent disorderly smoking and tippling in time of Divine Service, discovered a private Mass-house at a little alehouse at the back of Shoreditch, where nearly a hundred people had got together in a garret, most of them miserably poor and ragged, and upon examination appeared to be Irish. Some few were well dressed and several Mass-books were found with them. The priest made his escape out of a back door, leaving the rest to shift for themselves, whereupon some got out of a trap-door, and others, after giving an account of their names and places of abode, were let quietly depart. Notwithstanding, a great many met in the evening at the same place, declaring that Mass should be said there."<sup>1</sup>

Secret assemblies of this type, held in the cock-loft of an obscure tavern, with drawn bolts and a powerful Irishman to guard the locked door, must have been at first a strange contrast to the beautiful college chapel at Douay with its full ritual and attendant court of surpliced divines; but it was a change that Dr. Challoner had ample opportunity of experiencing both as a priest and bishop for many a long year to come.

Such was the condition of London Catholics in 1730, so far as it can be gathered from the barest records and most fugitive indications; but contemporary official evidence of their state is not altogether wanting. In the year 1737, Bishop Petre prepared a statement on the condition of the English mission to be submitted to the Holy See<sup>2</sup> A copy of this document in Dr. Challoner's writing exists in the Westminster Archives. It may be that it was drawn up by him in his capacity of vicar-general on behalf of the bishop; at any rate it affords us invaluable information as to the peculiar difficulties of the time and the view which the ecclesiastical authorities took of the situation.

<sup>1</sup> Cited in *Catholic England in Modern Times*, by Rev. John Morris, S.J., p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> *Præsens Status Missionis Anglicanæ*, Westminster Archives.

In the first lines of the document stress is laid on the fact that the number of Catholics is daily diminishing, and while it is pointed out that the survival of the faith at all is due to the aid given by the Catholic nobility and gentry, it is also clearly intimated that the continuous falling-off of Catholics is likewise in great measure owing to that class; partly, indeed, through their misfortunes, but partly also through their fault. Three causes are assigned for this defection: first and foremost, "the apostasy of many nobles," secondly, the political consequences of the ill-starred rising of 1715, and thirdly, the loss of fortune which had now befallen many well-known Catholic families. On this point the report does not mince matters. It admits that the ruin of their fortunes is in some instances due to the troubles of the times, while it insists that in other cases it is owing to luxury and extravagance. The inevitable result of the ruin of the nobility and gentry, from whatever cause arising, is the disappearance of the missionaries supported by them and the consequent gradual disappearance of the faith from the surrounding country.

But if the laity are thus blamed, the clergy receive even greater censure; for after noting the opportunities which London afforded for the freer exercise of the Catholic religion by reason of the ambassadors' chapels, the report states that conversions, though not entirely lacking, would be more numerous if there were at hand a suitable body of labourers.

"But several of the missionaries, as we behold, not without deep grief of mind, are inflamed with no zeal for souls, but seek the things which are their own and not the things of Jesus Christ. Not a few of them, even, either entirely rough and ignorant, or being men of bad character, give scandal both to Catholics and others."

The first remedy which is suggested as desirable to cure these evils, is greater care in the selection of candidates for the priesthood, with more careful exclusion of those who are unsuitable for missionary work. In this connection formal complaint is made of two priests by name, a secular called Macdonnel and a Franciscan, Bernard Molloy. They are stated to have been granted faculties at Rome independently of the approbation and consent of the vicar apostolic, notwithstanding the fact that he had already for good cause refused faculties to both of

them. Secondly, a reform is called for of the administration of the seminaries abroad from which the priesthood was recruited, especially the English Colleges at Rome and Valladolid. The points of reform suggested are that the full income of each college should be spent on the education of students; that only those students shall be admitted who are sent to them by the vicars apostolic; and that the course of studies be better adapted to the needs of the English mission.

Finally the administration of the embassy chapels is dealt with. The vital importance of these chapels to the Catholics of London having been pointed out, the Holy See is besought to use its influence with the various Catholic Powers, so that definite instructions may be issued to the ambassadors. The points of these instructions are to provide large and spacious chapels, as those in existence are inadequate for the number of the people; to have the embassies in those parts of London where Catholics can most easily assemble; to take great care in choosing suitable priests as their chaplains and only such as are recommended by the vicar apostolic.

Even from this summary it will be seen that this report confirms the conclusion to which all other evidence leads, that never had the hopes of English Catholics been so low or their fortunes in so hard a case, as in the reigns of the first two Georges. With the failure of the Stuart cause their political hopes languished and at length died away; while there seemed no other prospect in the future than gradual extinction. Only when they were so weak as to be no longer a cause for apprehension did the Government venture to grant them, unlooked for, that toleration which was the necessary condition of the marvellous revival yet to come. Nothing could have seemed less likely to a Catholic of 1730, than that within a hundred years, without any revolution in the State, they should have attained complete civil and religious liberty, and that the Catholics of 1830 should already hold in their hands the first fruits of the great growth and development which the nineteenth century was to bring.

## CHAPTER VI.

### MISSIONARY PRIEST IN LONDON.

1730-1738.

OF Challoner's life as a simple priest in London we have hardly any information. Scarcely any of his letters written during that time are extant; his work was not such as to be recorded in diocesan archives, and his early biographers pass over eight years of his life, from 1730 to 1738, almost in silence. Barnard confines himself to an account of the works he then published; Milner is content with a page of generalities; and Butler, though he ventures on a more detailed account, yet includes in it incidents clearly of a far later date. The following is his description of Challoner's daily life at this time:—

“From his arrival in London, till he was consecrated Bishop, he was a perfect model of a Missionary Priest. He avoided more intercourse with the world than was necessary; he was most assiduous in the discharge of all his functions, and gave, what these did not employ of his time, to prayer and meditation. At six o'clock in the morning he rose: said his morning prayer, and made an hour's meditation; he seldom omitted to celebrate Mass; he said the office of the Church, as far as his employments admitted, at the hours prescribed by the Rubric. After Mass, he remained for some time at home, and received all who had business with him. Afterwards, when his duty called him abroad, he went out, and endeavoured to return soon enough to allow himself some time for prayer and recollection before he dined. His visits among his flock were not unfrequent, and generally made at the time of tea; but he carried piety and recollection with him, wherever he went, and diffused them among all that were present. He was very cheerful, and the cause of cheerfulness in others; but he stopt very short of mirth. He was always serene, affable, unaffected,



prudent and charitable; never said anything which tended, even remotely, to his own advantage; he always listened with modest attention, and interrupted no one, unless the glory of his God, or the defence of his neighbour made it necessary. He reprov'd with the greatest gentleness. His conduct abundantly verified the golden maxim of St. Francis of Sales, that 'a good man is never outdone in good manners'. . . . His visits were always short, and nothing, except the most urgent necessity, ever kept him from returning to his abode at a very early hour, that he might be in the way to hear confessions, to give advice, to catechise, to attend to the calls of the sick or dying, or to exercise any other missionary duty, for which it should be necessary or expedient that he should then be found at home."<sup>1</sup>

To this Milner adds, that "Like the Apostle of the Gentiles he considered himself as the *debtor of all men*, who stood in need of his spiritual assistance, nevertheless he considered himself as particularly commissioned to preach the gospel to the poor, whose cellars, garrets, hospitals, workhouses and prisons were much more agreeable, as well as familiar, to him than the splendid habitations of the great and opulent".<sup>2</sup>

When we recall what the prisons of those days were, before John Howard had stirred the conscience of the nation to reform these hot-beds of moral and physical corruption, we may well imagine into what an *inferno* of debauchery, blasphemy and misery the disguised priest must constantly have penetrated. Scenes of violence and immorality must have grown sadly familiar to him as he wended his way through the filthy alleys and courts of St. Giles. Dressed as a layman in the brown clothes that the clergy then usually wore, he walked the streets of London on his errands of mercy, only venturing to assume the vestments of his office when within the sheltering walls of an embassy or behind the fast-drawn bolts of a garret door.

We do not even know where he lived, though it was probably in the same neighbourhood, to the north of Holborn, where he afterwards dwelt as bishop. Devonshire Street, Red Lion Street, Lamb's Conduit Street and Gloucester Street, in

<sup>1</sup> "Life," *Catholic Magazine*, 1831, p. 649.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Challoner*, p. 7.

all of which he resided at one time or another, lie close together near Red Lion Square. It was a convenient district for him, not far from Lincoln's Inn Fields with its Catholic settlement, near to the miserable district of St. Giles where so much of his work lay, and yet within easy distance of country lanes and green fields on the north.

One of the advantages of his return to England would naturally have been that he would have more frequent opportunities of seeing his mother. But shortly after his return she died,—it would seem suddenly, for he was not present at her death or burial. Bishop Milner records her death on the 29th of March, 1731, and adds that "her son's active employments in the service of God did not permit him to attend the funeral, his place, however, as chief mourner, was supplied by a near Catholic relation, one Mr. Friend, who was Steward to the Right Honourable Lord Petre".<sup>1</sup> Had a fatal termination to her illness been expected Dr. Challoner would certainly have been by his mother's side, but if, as we may infer, her death occurred suddenly, he may well have hesitated at taking the long journey to Winchester and back for the funeral, especially as the time between death and burial was short, and the news would take two days to reach him. She was interred in the old Catholic churchyard of St. James near Winchester Castle, interesting because it was the only burying-place then in Catholic hands, and consequently the only spot in which Catholic burial could be given. Her grave-stone bore the inscription—<sup>2</sup>



MRS. GRACE CHALLONER  
DIED MARCH 29TH 1731  
AGED 62 YEARS.  
R. I. P.

From his first arrival in London he must have taken his place among the leading priests, as befitted the reputation he

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Challoner*, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> For an account of St. James's Cemetery, see *Catholic Magazine*, 1832, p. 174. The inscription is given by Dr. Milner in his *Life of Dr. Challoner*, and is recorded in the *Winchester Registers*. See Catholic Record Society's Publications, vol. i., *Miscellanea*, i., p. 243.

had brought with him from Douay ; and that he did actually do so is shown by the fact of his election as a member of the chapter, two years after his return to England. To be chosen a "capitular" was an honour only bestowed on those priests who were prominent for their services and highly regarded by their brethren. The chapter had been appointed in 1623 by Dr. William Bishop, the first vicar apostolic of England. He had meant it to fill the functions of a cathedral chapter in advising and assisting the bishop, though owing to the fact that the twenty canons who composed it were scattered throughout England, and could only rarely meet, it is obvious that it was necessarily of a very exceptional character. One of the main objects in the foundation of this chapter was to preserve jurisdiction in case of the bishop's own death.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bishop applied to Rome for official confirmation of this act, but his death took place, and no such formal confirmation was ever received, though the Congregation of Propaganda recognised the existence of the chapter and allowed it to exercise certain jurisdiction. Dr. Bishop's successor, Dr. Richard Smith, not only continued the chapter, but gave it the privilege of electing its own canons and even the dean himself, without ratification, if the vicariate should remain vacant after his own death.<sup>2</sup> In the event it proved fortunate that this provision had been made, for on Bishop Smith's death, in 1655, no further appointment of a vicar apostolic was made for thirty years. During the whole of this period the chapter exercised jurisdiction, making its reports to Propaganda and issuing faculties to the clergy.<sup>3</sup> When Dr. John Leyburn was created vicar apostolic in the reign of James II. he received instructions to act independently of the chapter, and from that time it never exercised its former authority.<sup>4</sup> Yet till the Restoration of the Hierarchy by Pope Pius IX. in 1850, it continued

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Bishop's letter to his Roman agent, 25th Sept., 1623. Dodd, *Church History*, Tierney's ed., IV., cclxxxiii.

<sup>2</sup> Dodd, *Church History*, iii., 140-41.

<sup>3</sup> For a fuller account of the position of the chapter, see *infra*, chap. xvi.

<sup>4</sup> "The chapter had, it appears, offended Rome by constantly refusing to receive a vicar apostolic and demanding an ordinary. Moreover, when Rome offered to confirm the chapter on condition of having the appointment of some of its officers, they absolutely refused such a condition" (Mgr. Ward, *Catholic London a Century Ago*).

in possession of all its ancient privileges; the most eminent priests of each generation, including most of the vicars apostolic themselves, were members, and it remained the one body, election to which set a seal of something like public recognition to a priest's career.<sup>1</sup>

Challoner was elected to the chapter at a "consult" held in May, 1732, together with his former colleague at Douay, Dr. Matthew Beare, and Dr. Charles Umfreville, usually known as Fell, the author of the *Lives of the Saints*, and a man of somewhat unfortunate notoriety in his day.<sup>2</sup> The election, however, gave rise to disputes among the members of the chapter, some of whom questioned its validity, owing to certain irregularities in the procedure, and it was ultimately declared invalid by the General Assembly of the chapter. Owing to this decision the election of Challoner, Beare and Fell was quashed. There was in reality no objection to Challoner or Beare and they were both re-elected a short time after; but the dispute concerning Dr. Fell continued unabated. With this controversy, however, Dr. Challoner was in no way concerned, except that when it was referred to Bishop Petre at a much later date the bishop consulted both Challoner and Beare, and in the letter which he addressed to the dean of the chapter, finally declaring the election invalid, he mentions that he had availed himself of their counsel.<sup>3</sup>

In May, 1736, Dr. Challoner was chosen "Controversial Writer" to the chapter, an office which he held till February, 1757, when he resigned it and was succeeded by his friend Dr. William Walton. It was an office that was easier to fill with success then than it would be now. The teaching of the Church was at that time far less understood, and the general charges brought against her doctrines and practices were marked by mistakes, misrepresentations and even calumny. Attacks such as these were easy of refutation, especially to one

<sup>1</sup> On the Restoration of the Hierarchy the chapter resolved itself into "The Old Brotherhood of the Secular Clergy," under which name it still exists, a venerable relic of our past ecclesiastical history.

<sup>2</sup> The condemnation of his *Lives of the Saints* at Rome and the unfortunate incident of the election here referred to, made him the subject of considerable discussion and unfavourable comment during his later years.

<sup>3</sup> Letter, Bishop Petre to Dr. Ryder, 10th Feb., 1736 (O.S.), 21st Feb., 1737 (N.S.). Westminster Archives (Papers, 1736-40).

who, like Challoner, had completed a long, close and systematic course of Scholastic Theology. Moreover the field of controversy was narrower and much was generally admitted then which to-day would be in dispute. Thus the words of Scripture were cited by all parties as finally conclusive, and the doctrine of Divine Revelation was still unquestioned by the men whom Challoner was called upon to meet as opponents.

From the first he seemed to have been successful in reclaiming bad Catholics and in making converts. His catechetical and controversial works illustrate his method, which was to lay a solid foundation of instruction on which to base his exhortations. To touch the will through the intelligence was his object. His first appeal is always to authority; to the authority of the Church if he is addressing Catholics, to that of Scripture if he is arguing with others; and, of course, in his day an appeal to Scripture met with a far more general acceptance than at the present time. Having quoted his credentials as a teacher, in this manner, he proceeds to lay out his matter in the most orderly and methodical way, frequently making use of numbered divisions and subdivisions. In this part of his work he confines himself most strictly to the matter in hand: citations from Scripture, dogmatic truths, theological arguments, historical facts are all gathered together in the closest compass. When this task has been accomplished he makes what may be regarded as the personal appeal, and, if necessary, pleads, encourages and exhorts with deep conviction and earnestness. But all his efforts in this direction are immediately based on the truths which he has been at pains to establish.

In his work of instructing Catholics and non-Catholics alike he seems to have felt the need of suitable books with which to supplement his own teaching, and from the beginning of his ministry in London he set himself, with his keen practical sense, to supply the want. The success which the works of Robert Manning and Dr. Hawarden had already achieved showed what could be done in that direction. He was a great believer in the power of the press, and he saw the use which could be made of popular works of instruction that should be both concise and cheap. His early works are nearly all pamphlets from twenty-four to one hundred pages in length, which were published for a few pence. In these days he would have



been an enthusiastic supporter of the Catholic Truth Society, and the Catholic press.

His first controversial work was published in 1732, and was called *The Unerring Authority of the Catholic Church in matters of Faith: maintained against the exceptions of a late Author, in his Answer to a Letter on the Subject of Infallibility*.<sup>1</sup>

This is a carefully written book upon the subject which he regarded as of primary importance, the infallibility of the Church. His views on this point he explains in the opening sentences of the preface:—

“I have ever been of opinion that amongst all the controversies of our days in this great division of Christendom, there is none of so great importance as that which concerneth the Authority of the Church.”

Having developed this, he continues:—

“Wherefore the shortest way to end all our disputes must be, 1st, to enquire which of the two we are by divine Appointment to follow in our altercations concerning the true meaning and interpretation of scripture, and in all other religious controversies; ourselves, that is our own private judgment, or the judgment of the Church of Christ. 2dly, To examine whether in such matters as these the Church of Christ can judge amiss so as to lead us astray by her decisions. 3dly, To weigh well and consider diligently where this Church of Christ is to be found. The deciding of these three questions is the short and plain way to satisfaction in Religion, whereas the other way of descending into every particular controversy is long and tedious.”

This passage sufficiently indicates the substance of the book, and further analysis would be superfluous; especially as it has now become so old-fashioned in style that it is no longer likely to be read. But the matter of the book is dealt with in such a clear and logical manner in the eight preliminary propositions and the eleven sections of the dissertation itself, that it

<sup>1</sup> This book is frequently assigned to the year 1735, doubtless on the authority of Barnard who places it in that year, in which another edition did, in fact, appear. But Mr. Gillow in his *Bibliographical Dictionary of English Catholics* gives the correct date; though Mr. Cooper in the *Dictionary of National Biography* has not followed him and gives “1735(?)”. Neither Butler nor Milner gives any date. There is really no doubt on the subject, as copies of the 1732 edition are in the libraries of Old Hall and Oscott.

might still be consulted with great profit and useful results by those who are engaged in the controversies of to-day. Challoner's own self-appointed task again and again was to select old weapons from the armoury of the Church and burnish them up so as to be of fresh use in the altered circumstances of his time; and he would have been the first to realise that much of his own work would in time become antiquated and require a new setting to be effective.

The circumstances which led to his writing this book are explained by him in the preface:—

“The occasion of publishing the following sheets was given by Mr. J. R. a Lincolnshire Minister, in a pamphlet lately set out upon the subject of Infallibility, in answer to a letter which, it seems, a good woman, his parishioner, had written at his own request upon that subject. In which letter, as this gentleman has himself published it, I must own I am at a loss to find so much ill manners and insolence of which he so loudly complains.”

“J. R.” seems to have been particularly bitter against the Catholic Church, and Challoner expressly charges him with making the Catholics of Boston feel his indignation “in a more sensible manner than by the virulence of his pen”—the eighteenth century meaning of the word “sensible” lending a more sinister interpretation to this passage than its modern use would imply.

In this book we also have Challoner's opinion on the question of Anglican Orders, to which he had devoted considerable attention. He denies their validity on two main grounds, the absence of any proof of Barlow's episcopal consecration, and the insufficiency of the forms for ordaining priests and consecrating bishops in King Edward's Ordinal. Minor points he brushed aside. “As to our English Protestant Clergy, I know they take it ill that we should call in question their Orders; yet we have very good reasons for so doing. For setting aside the History of their Nag's-Head consecration attested by Mr. Neale and others; setting also aside the many suspicions of forgery which are objected against the Lambeth register, which never durst show its face in all Queen Elizabeth's reign; notwithstanding our most celebrated writers, Dr. Sanders, Dr. Stapleton, Dr. Harding, etc., frequently objected to the Protestant

Prelates their want of Orders ; and Bishop Bonner upon that account excepted against Mr. Horn's tendering him the Oath of Supremacy (which exception stopped Horn's proceedings and puzzled all our judges). Setting, I say, all this aside, and supposing the Lambeth records to be genuine, Barlow was the Bishop-Consecrator from whom Archbishop Parker received his Character. But when or where was Barlow himself consecrated ?" <sup>1</sup>

Having reviewed briefly the reasons for supposing that Barlow was never consecrated at all, he passes to his chief contention that the "English Protestant forms of ordaining priests and consecrating bishops are substantially different from those used in all ages by the Church of Christ, as well in the East as in the West,"—and therefore insufficient. In substantiating this conclusion he incidentally remarks that the form for conferring the order of a Bishop in the ordinal of Edward VI. is indeterminate and "carries nothing with it but what might be said to any child at his confirmation"; and adds, "I know that upon this objection's being urged by Erastus, our English Protestants since King Charles the Second's Restoration have changed their forms: but this change only makes their case worse; inasmuch as by it they have publicly acknowledged the force of our objection, which they could not answer but by this change, which came a hundred years too late".<sup>2</sup>

It may be well to add a word as to Challoner's opinion of the Nag's Head story, according to which Matthew Parker was "consecrated" at the Nag's Head Tavern, in Cheapside, by John Scory laying the Bible on his head with the words, "Take thou authority to preach the Word of God sincerely".

That this was intended as a formal consecration he did not believe, but he thought that the evidence that some mock ceremony actually took place at the Nag's Head was too strong to be regarded as a pure fabrication. "Ye Nag's Head story seems incredible, yet there must have been something in it: from ye testimonies of those that witnessed it and ye common report and belief of many Protestants as well as Catholics. See Heylin, *History of y<sup>e</sup> Reformation*. Perhaps it was but

<sup>1</sup> P. 157.<sup>2</sup> P. 158.

a sacrilegious sport in their cups which did not hinder a Lambeth consecration afterwards.”<sup>1</sup>

*The Uncerring Authority of the Catholic Church* was successful, and fresh editions were called for in 1735 and 1736. In the same year, 1732, he wrote and published a tract which was useful both for inquiring Protestants and insufficiently instructed Catholics. He called it *The Grounds of the Catholic Doctrine contained in the Profession of Faith published by Pope Pius the Fourth, by way of question and answer*. On the title-page he printed the advice of St. Peter: “Be ready always to give an answer to every one that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you”. Then having printed the Creed itself, he proceeds to his catechism in which he does not follow it article by article, but arranges the doctrine under several heads. Quotations from the Bible occupy a large part of almost all the answers, and incidentally illustrate his own intimate acquaintance with the sacred books. He ends with an appendix in which he sets out the motives for belief in the Catholic faith, “which according to Dr. Jeremy Taylor, a learned Protestant prelate, may very easily persuade persons of much reason and more piety to retain that which they know to have been the religion of their forefathers”. With these he compares the motives of St. Augustine for belief in the Church.

In all his works, from the earliest to the latest, he insists on the point that the Old Religion is the true religion. In this book he lays it down that “the true Church of Christ can be no other than the Catholic, which alone has always had a visible being in the world ever since Christ's time: not the Protestant, nor any other modern sect, which only came into the world since the year 1500. For those that came into the world 1,500 years after Christ, came into the world 1,500 years too late to be the Religion or Church of Christ.”<sup>2</sup>

To this view, he usually adds the argument that the Reformation stands condemned by the characters and achieve-

<sup>1</sup> MS. in Challoner's writing headed, “Reasons for doubting of y<sup>e</sup> Validity”. It bears date “Aug. y<sup>e</sup> 5th 1732,” though this date may refer to another memorandum. Westminster Archives.

The evidence as to what did occur at the Nag's Head is considered in detail by Challoner in his later book, *The Grounds of the Old Religion*, published in 1742. See *infra*, chapter xii.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. i., sect. 6.

ments of the first Reformers. In this tract he only lightly touches on this contention, but in the following year he devoted another pamphlet to this subject alone.

This is called *A Short History of the First Beginning and Progress of the Protestant Religion*. It was published in 1733 and is again in the form of a catechism. In this work Dr. Challoner quotes none but Protestant authorities, and in many instances the answers to the questions are given in their words. The first two chapters gave an outline of the rise of Protestantism on the continent and some account of the various sects such as Lutherans, Calvinists, Anabaptists, Antinomians and others. The remaining four chapters are devoted to the history of Protestantism in England during the reigns of Henry VIII., Edward VI., Mary and Elizabeth. Both these pamphlets met with great success and were reprinted again and again within a few years.

The year 1734 was marked by the death of the venerable Bishop Giffard which took place at Hammersmith on the 12th of March. The following account of his passing was sent by Bishop Petre to the Rev. Laurence Mayes, his agent at Rome :—

“ March 14, O.S., 1733-4.

“ Our excellent Prelate Bonaventure Giffard worn out with his Apostolical labours and a far advanced age, having celebrated Mass on last Corpus Christi Day has almost ever since been confin'd to his chamber, where he wasted away by degrees under the torture of the Strangury, till being reduc'd to skin and bones he was constrained to keep his bed on the first instant. From that day he laboured under a continual strong fever, which often made him delirious, but even then it appeared that his heart had taken a strong bent towards God and his flock, by the expressions he let fall in those raving fits. His Lordship during the ten last months frequently desir'd and receiv'd the sacraments with extraordinary fervour, humility and confidence, And on last Tuesday, the feast of St. Gregory the Great, the Apostle of England, half an hour after eleven at night amidst the tears of his spiritual daughters, in their community at Hammersmith near London, just as their priest his confessor was concluding for the second time the recommendation of the soul, he gave up his pious spirit into the hands of



God in the ninety second year of his age and forty sixth of his episcopate and Apostolic Vicarage."

As Bishop Petre had been consecrated with rights of succession he immediately became vicar apostolic on Dr. Giffard's death; though, when applying to Propaganda for faculties, he seized the opportunity of begging relief from the burden which he dreaded. This request naturally was not granted and he had to face the responsibilities of his position. Though his spiritual fitness for the office was unquestioned, he was without doubt a man who required a strong and loyal assistant to give him the support that he needed. For this help he turned to Challoner, and it was probably at this time that he appointed him as his vicar-general. This is a fact that has not hitherto been recorded in any published account of Challoner's life, but it appears from the Douay Diary, where under the date 26th October, 1737, it is stated that a student named Heylin arrived with recommendations from Bishop Petre and Dr. Challoner "his Vicar General".

During the year 1734, Dr. Challoner, encouraged by the success of his previous pamphlets, issued three new publications. One of these was a little tract of twelve pages called *A Roman Catholic's Reasons why he cannot conform to the Protestant Religion*. It consists of thirteen reasons, each briefly supported by Scripture or other authority, and concludes with "A Specimen of Luther's Spirit". As it has no title-page it is a difficult matter to trace the various editions, but it has often been reprinted.

Next came *The Touchstone of the New Religion*. It has been stated that this was not an original work, but a reprint of an early seventeenth century tract by Dr. Matthew Kellison, fourth president of Douay College, which was first issued in 1623 under the title *The Gagge of the Reformed Gospel* and was regarded as having led to the conversion of many.<sup>1</sup>

In reality Challoner's *Touchstone of the New Religion* is an entirely different work from that of Kellison, though doubt-

<sup>1</sup> It was answered by Richard Montague, afterwards Bishop of Norwich, in a book with the extraordinary name, *A Gagge for the New Gospel? No, A New Gagge for an Old Goose*, but the chief result of this attempt was to embroil Montague in difficulties with other Protestants which resulted in his impeachment in Parliament for false doctrine. Later editions of Kellison's work were styled *The Touchstone of the Reformed Gospel*.

less he derived the idea and even the name from the older book. He has followed the same plan of taking statements of Protestant doctrine and refuting them from Scripture. Naturally in this he used Kellison's book, but in no sense can his pamphlet be called a new edition of it. For one thing, the two works are very different in extent, Kellison's little book containing 140 pages, whereas Challoner's tract only occupies twenty-four. Moreover Challoner's sixty assertions do not correspond to the fifty-two "controversies" of Kellison ; so that his work cannot even be considered as an abridgment.

Another reprint in the same year was his edition of Gother's *Essay on the Change and Choice of Religion*, which he published, with some verbal alterations, as *The Sincere Christian's Guide in the Change of Religion*.<sup>1</sup>

All the above pamphlets had been addressed to those who, whether Catholic or Protestant, accepted the divine authority of the Scriptures, but in the course of his work in London Challoner found that there were those who required help with regard to the very foundations of the Christian belief. He ends the *Short History of the Protestant Religion* with a reference to the growth of Atheism, Deism, Latitudinarianism and Free Thought, complaining of those who "have almost banished Religion from this Kingdom ; and laughed out of doors both the belief and practice of Christianity".

In London this scepticism was a special danger to young men, and Challoner now planned a short work in which he might explain in a simple manner the chief arguments for the existence of God, and the spirituality and immortality of the soul, the fact of divine revelation and the divinity of Christ and the Holy Ghost. This he published in 1735 as a little shilling book called *The Young Gentleman instructed in the Grounds of the Christian Religion*. It was printed for the Catholic publisher, Thomas Meighan, in Drury Lane, and is the earliest of his books which gives the publisher's name.

Dr. Challoner's compassionate zeal for souls finds expression in the touching address to the "Young Gentlemen of these Nations" which forms the preface to the little book. In this he speaks with more evident feeling than is usual in

<sup>1</sup> The MS. of this work is at Oscott.

his earlier writings. The body of the work is divided into three dialogues between a young gentleman and his tutor. In the first he explains the proofs of the existence of God drawn from the necessity of a First Cause, the argument from design, the principle of conscious life and the universal consent of mankind. The passage in which he explains the argument from design is, I think, the only instance in all his writings of any reference to the beauty of Nature, and it is a good example of his more florid style of composition. The second dialogue treats briefly of Revelation, alleging Prophecies, Miracles, the Propagation of the Faith, and the life and doctrines of Christ as the chief testimonies in support of Christianity. The remaining dialogue is devoted to the divinity of the Second and Third Persons of the Blessed Trinity.

In 1736 he crossed swords for the first time with the Non-conformists, the occasion being some sermons preached against the Catholic Church, at Salter's Hall, in Salter's Hall Court, Cannon Street, which were subsequently published in pamphlet form. Dr. Challoner, under the pseudonym of *Philaethes*, answered these in a work which he called *A Specimen of the Spirit of the Dissenting Teachers in their sermons lately preached at Salter's Hall; or some remarks upon Mr. John Barker's Sermon against Popery, preached Jan. 9, 1734-5, and Mr. S. Chandler's Sermon upon the notes of the Church preached Jan. 16, of the same year*. This was published by Meighan, and bore on the title-page the uncompromising text from the first book of Kings: "I will go forth and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets". This strikes the key-note of the whole work. Dr. Challoner was moved to stern resentment at what he considered deliberate misrepresentation of the doctrines of the Church by men who should have been better informed.

Both his antagonists were men of some position. John Barker had been a noted Presbyterian preacher in London since 1709, when at the age of twenty-seven he had been appointed assistant preacher to the congregation at Crosby Square. In 1714 he became minister at Mare Street, Hackney, where his methods caused the secession of part of the congregation, though he soon attracted hearers enough to replace the dissentients. At the time of this controversy he still ministered at Mare

Street, though he was gradually adopting the views that had been taught by Baxter, and in 1738 felt it his duty to resign his post.<sup>1</sup>

Of the two, Chandler was the abler man. He had been a schoolfellow of Bishop Butler and of Secker, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, and though a strict Nonconformist he always maintained relations with the higher clergy of the Established Church. In 1726, having acted for ten years as minister of the Presbyterian congregation at Peckham, he was appointed assistant minister at the Old Jewry, where he became sole pastor two years later. He was a man of considerable learning, and was subsequently elected a Fellow of the Royal Society and also of the Society of Antiquaries. In his theological views he was a moderate Calvinist and he published numerous works written from that standpoint. His naturally stern temper rendered him sharp in controversy and he wrote several pamphlets against opponents of various kinds. In 1734 he had been one of the Protestant divines who had met two Catholic priests in some formal conferences held in Nicholas Lane, an account of which he subsequently published in pamphlet form. Some of his other tracts were very bitter in tone against the Catholic Church, notably one which he wrote at the time of the Rebellion in 1745.<sup>2</sup>

In dealing with the sermons of these two ministers Dr. Challoner perceived that the learning and ability of Chandler made him the more worthy of careful attention. The crude mis-statements of Barker he disposed of in twenty-four contemptuous pages, quoting the preacher's statements line by line and convicting him of ignorance, untruthfulness, and inaccuracy so glaring as scarcely to need confutation. Commenting on Barker's statement, "They (the Papists) grant licenses to commit any sort of sin," he says: "One would think Mr. Barker was resolved, that there should not be so much as one line in this page without some notable untruth, but of all that he has told throughout his whole sermon, this I think deserves the first place. Insomuch that if it be true that the fifteen Salter's Hall Preachers, as People are apt to judge by their sermons, have

<sup>1</sup> He was afterwards morning preacher at Salter's Hall from 1741 to 1762, in which year he died.

<sup>2</sup> He continued minister at Old Jewry till his death, which occurred in 1766.



all agreed to lie for a wager, for my part I should give it to Mr. Barker. But *Anathema* say I, and all Catholics with me to any one that pretends to grant license to commit sin.”<sup>1</sup>

It was not so easy to dispose of Chandler as of Barker, not that there was anything of greater weight in the attack, but because in discussing the notes of the Church the preacher was able to fill his pages with random attacks on all points of Catholic doctrine, and to adduce once more all the fables and falsified evidence that do stock duty on these occasions. There was more parade of scholarship to deal with, but in this matter Challoner was perfectly at home, and this book alone shows how profound was his learning and how wide his theological reading. His knowledge of Church history was also brought into play with damaging effect, and he had no difficulty in showing that his opponent, in spite of his pretensions, had not the most elementary acquaintance with Catholic theology. This fact was so striking that after the first half-dozen pages of his reply, Challoner having observed that Mr. Chandler “doubtless would take it very ill, that any one should but suspect that a man of his reputation has undertaken to preach against Popery without knowing so much as the most obvious and common principles of Papists,” continues, “therefore, as we must not accuse him of ignorance we are forced to charge him with most shameful and wilful misrepresentations”.<sup>2</sup>

In truth it was no hard task for one who had had long dialectical training in the schools, with the careful precision of thought engendered therein, to refute the loose reasoning and random statements of such publications. It may be doubted, indeed, whether they were worth refutation so careful and thorough; but if unanswered they might have been thought unanswerable, and if answered at all it was well that the exposure should be final and complete. At any rate no more was heard of the preachers of Salter’s Hall.

In 1737 Dr. Challoner turned a little while from controversy to bring out an entirely new translation of the *Imitation of Christ*, the older version then in the hands of Catholics having become antiquated in style. The book was a favourite

<sup>1</sup> P. 11.<sup>2</sup> P. 32.



one with him and he wished it to be widely spread, so that his task was a labour of love. His rendering fulfilled his hopes, for it soon became the standard version; it has been reprinted a countless number of times and still remains in popular use.

He was also concerned at this time in the publication of a folio edition of the Rheims New Testament. This he brought out in conjunction with the Rev. Francis Blyth, a Discalced Carmelite living in London. Little or nothing is, however, known of the history of this book. It is a handsome folio with a title-page printed in red and black, and proclaiming itself "The Fifth Edition (the First in Folio) adorn'd with cuts". It contains the substance of the original Rheims title-page considerably rearranged, but ending with the usual quotations from the Bible and St. Augustine. There is no publisher's name, but the page concludes with "Permissu Superiorum. Printed in the Year MDCCXXXVIII." It contains the approbations both of the University of Rheims (prefixed to the first edition, 1582) and of the University of Douay (second edition, 1600), also the *Preface to the Reader*; but the old *Table of Heretical Corruptions* is relegated to the end of the volume and the *Explication of certaine wordes* is omitted altogether.

In other respects it resembles the previous editions, with the striking difference that it follows the precedent set by Dr. Witham in his 1730 edition of the New Testament, and prints each verse separately instead of giving a running text with small figures to indicate the verses. And the notes, instead of being given at the end of each chapter, are printed at the foot of the page. There are five full-page engravings by G. V<sup>dr</sup> Gucht, and the whole publication is on a costly scale, so that in this respect it differs from the books he had hitherto published, which had been issued at a very low price so as to be within the means of all.

The labour he expended on the New Testament and the *Imitation of Christ* had been congenial work, but he was very soon recalled to the more wearisome task of controversy, with results that, for a time at least, altered the tenor of his own life and brought his missionary work in London to a standstill. For his opponent was so hard hit by the searching criticism of his book, that instead of replying to Dr. Challoner by means of his pen, he attempted to get rid of so formidable an adversary by

putting the provisions of the Penal Laws in force against him.

This opponent was Dr. Conyers Middleton, a clergyman and scholar of considerable notoriety in his day, a man of restless and litigious temperament, of doubtful honesty as a controversialist and of undoubted scepticism as a minister of religion. His Cambridge career had been a stormy one, and it was signalised by the acrimonious strife he carried on against Bentley, the classical scholar, whom he hated cordially and fought in the press and in the law courts with relentless animosity. His own charm of manner in private life and his great powers as a writer won for him many friends, and though he was bitterly disappointed at not obtaining high preferment in the Church, his career was a fairly successful one. His theological writings, which were numerous, were of directly sceptical tendency, and he was frequently accused of covert infidelity, in the numerous replies that were made to his books—criticism which he was always ready to repay with interest. He retained his position as a clergyman of the Church of England to the end of his life, as well as the two small livings which he held, though long before his death he is said to have “suspended his belief” in revelation.<sup>1</sup>

During 1724 and 1725 Middleton had stayed in Rome, where he formed a collection of antiquities and devoted himself to archæological studies. The results of his labours were embodied in his *Letter from Rome showing an exact conformity between Popery and Paganism: or the Religion of the present Romans derived from that of their heathen ancestors*. This work, the scope of which is sufficiently indicated by its title, was first published in 1729.

As it was regarded in England as a brilliant attack upon the Catholic Church, it met with great success and passed through three editions within the next six or seven years. Though Challoner had studied the book carefully, it was far from being his intention to contest it in detail, easily though this might have been done; but in view of its popular success it seemed advisable to publish some refutation of its main thesis. A suitable opportunity presented itself in 1737 when

<sup>1</sup> This is on the authority of Warburton, with whom after a brief friendship he had quarrelled (Nicholls, *Anecdotes*, p. 648).

he was about to issue a new book on the rites and ceremonies of the Catholic Church. This was *The Catholic Christian instructed in the Sacraments, Sacrifice, Ceremonies and Observances of the Church*, which for a century and more remained the standard work of instruction on these points.

Of the book itself it is enough to say that it consists of explanations, in catechetical form, of the seven sacraments and the rites used in conferring them, the Mass and its ceremonies, and such matters as Indulgences, devotion to Our Lady and the Saints, prayers for the Dead, Celibacy, Relics and other features of Catholic life. It was the preface to this book that Dr. Challoner devoted to refuting the main contention of the *Letter from Rome*.

On reading this preface it is not difficult to understand the resentment which Dr. Conyers Middleton showed on its publication, for in this brief compass of twenty-four pages Challoner pitilessly exposes the foundation of sand on which the whole pretentious edifice was reared, and with a few contemptuous strokes brings the whole structure tumbling down about the author's head. It is certainly his masterpiece in controversy, and incidentally shows him to have possessed gifts of irony and incisive ridicule, of which there are few traces in any of his other writings. For in parts it is written in a lighter strain than is usual with him, and though it is not without passages which reveal a deeper feeling, the conclusion is penned in a spirit of light raillery, which with all possible politeness reduces its opponent to the ridiculous, and effects its most deadly damage with a smile.

The opening passage is one of grave explanation. Dr. Middleton's *Letter from Rome* is a work "directly levelled against some part of the ceremonies of the Church," and moreover "has been received with great applause by many in this nation," so that in his own book now appearing on the doctrine and ceremonies of the Catholic Church the reader may reasonably expect some notice to be taken of Dr. Middleton's views.

"'Tis to comply with so reasonable an expectation that I am determined to employ my preface in making some animadversion upon this Letter of the Doctor, to which, though consisting of seventy pages in quarto, I hope, with the help of God, in one short sheet to give a full and satisfactory answer."

Having briefly enumerated the eight principal points of Catholic practice which Dr. Middleton claimed to have proved to be of Pagan origin, he goes straight to the heart of the matter in sternly pointing out "a piece of Foul Play in him, unworthy of that candour of which he makes profession, and which he acknowledges he met with in all those whom he had the honour to converse with at Rome".

Briefly, this is that in drawing his parallel illustrating the conformity of Catholicity to Paganism, he ignores on the one hand all the grosser features of heathendom, and on the other all the vital doctrines and practices of Christianity, irreconcilably opposed as these are. And leaving this essential incompatibility out of sight, he bases his whole argument on the superficial similarity of practices, innocent in themselves, which were used in Pagan worship, to certain Catholic customs of minor importance and not essential in character. Challoner has no difficulty in exposing the fallacy of an argument which glosses over vital points of difference, to seize on accidental points of resemblance.

"Is not the one, true and living God worshipped there in three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? Does not the People universally believe in *Jesus Christ*? Is not the Eucharistick Sacrifice offered in all their Churches, in Memory of his Death and Passion? Is not the Word of God preached amongst them; the divine Office, consisting of Psalms, Scripture-Lessons, &c. daily sung; the Sacraments frequented &c.? And which of all these Things has been derived to the modern *Romans* from their heathen Ancestors? But it was not for the Doctor's Purpose to take any notice of any of these Things, no not so much as even of the Articles of the Profession of Faith published by Pope *Pius IV.* which he very well knows to be the Standard of what he calls *Papery*, and yet has not so much as offered to shew any Conformity in any one of them (excepting the Articles of *Saints* and their *Images*, which he grossly misrepresents) with the Doctrine or Practice of the *Pagans*. To such Shifts as these are Persons unhappily driven, who are resolved to maintain a bad Cause."<sup>1</sup>

Having thus swept away the entire foundation of "the Doctor's" arguments, he proceeds to reply briefly yet with

<sup>1</sup> P. v.



point to the eight matters of detail he had already enumerated. In this part of his argument he adopts a lighter tone, and though still seriously reprobating the undue insistence on external customs, to the entire exclusion of the significance attached to them, he occasionally relaxes the severity of his argument by a humorous remark or a bantering retort. Thus when speaking of holy water, he concludes :—

“As for the yearly Festival, which the Doctor says is celebrated with great Solemnity in the Month of *January*, and is called the *Benediction of Horses*, I never yet met with it in the *Roman Kalendar*; and tho’ I have spent the greatest Part of my Life abroad, never saw nor heard of any such Ceremony as that which he pretends is practised upon that Day by the Monks of *St. Anthony* near *St. Mary Major* in *Rome*. But however this be, we may hope there is nothing heathenish in this Ceremony, since the Doctor, who is so good a Christian, procured, tho’ it was, as he says, at the Expence of Eighteen-pence, his own Horses to be bless’d by these good Monks.”<sup>1</sup>

Shortly after this occurs the passage which was subsequently seized on by Dr. Conyers Middleton as the ground on which to prosecute Challoner. It was one in which he pointed out that the honour, which Catholics pay to the images of saints, is in no sense idolatry; and that if it were, all men who respect the images of the dead would fall under the like condemnation. In this passage, partly ironical, partly playful, he pictures the Church of England and the entire English people convicted of idolatry on the ground of the reverence they pay to the images and symbols of the dead. He points out that portraits were honoured in every English home, that representations of Moses and Aaron were common in their churches, and he makes playful allusion to the supporters of the Royal Arms which in those days surmounted the communion table in every English Church. He alludes to the statues recently placed on St. Paul’s Cathedral and to the cross surmounting the new dome, and finally, as a *reductio ad absurdum*, to the king’s effigy on the coin of the realm.

As this passage was made the ground of the charges against him it will be well to quote it in full.

“But, to make out the easier this Charge of Idolatry against

<sup>1</sup> P. vii.



us, the Doctor has made an important Discovery, which he fathers upon St. *Jerome*, tho' indeed 'tis a Brat of his own; which is, that all Images of the Dead are *Idols*, and consequently are liable to all those Censures which in the Scripture, in the Fathers, and in the Laws of Christian Emperors, are pronounced against *Idols*. An important Discovery indeed! by which it appears, that, after all the Pretences of his own Church to a thorough Reformation, she has not yet got rid of *Idols*, but has them every where standing, and new ones daily erected, in spite of the Law of God; and that not only in every private House, inhabited by her Children (scarce one of which is found without some Image or Picture of the Dead) but also in her publick Places, and in her very Churches, out of which tho' she has generally removed the Images of Christ (which 'tis hoped the Doctor will not look upon to be Idols, if he believes the Resurrection of his Redeemer) yet she has brought in, in their stead, the Images of Moses and Aaron, who are certainly dead; and, what is worse still, has introduced dead Lions and Unicorns into the Sanctuary, in place of the Cross of *Christ*; tho' this also of late has been erected upon the Top of the chief Church of the Kingdom, surrounded with many other of the Doctor's *Idols*, to the great Offence of the *Puritans*, who are the only People that will thank the Doctor for the Pains he has been at to furnish them with Arms against the establish'd Church. Tho' 'tis to be feared, if they take for Good the Doctor's Definition of an *Idol*, their Zeal against Idolatry may raise some Scruple in them, with relation to the Images of Kings deceased, which they carry in their pockets, or hoard up in their Bags, and which, 'tis thought, they worship more than either the living King or any Deity whatsoever."<sup>1</sup>

It should be remarked that Challoner by no means relied on passages such as this as his defence to the allegations. In every case he meets the difficulty squarely, but he drives home his explanations by retorting the difficulty upon his opponent. His final and most amusing use of this device is at the conclusion of the preface, where in an imaginary address which suggests a parallel with the harangue of "Count Potemkin" in the first of Newman's *Lectures on the Present Position of Catholics in England*, he pictures a Nonconformist such as Chandler

employing arguments, similar to those of Dr. Middleton, to prove that the Church of England was infested with Popery.

The point of this mock address is indicated in the opening sentence:—

“Beware, my dearly Beloved, of those People that call themselves *the Church of England*: For their Religion is wholly derived from that of their Romish Ancestors, and has an exact Conformity or Uniformity rather with Popery, and consequently with Paganism, from which, as Dr. *Middleton* has lately demonstrated, the Papists have borrowed their whole Religion. Now mark ye, my Beloved, how plainly I shall prove that these People who call themselves Protestants have taken their whole Religion from the Papists.”<sup>1</sup>

At the end of this address Challoner draws the moral, saying: “Now this kind of rhetoric, I am persuaded, whatever effect it might have with regard to Dissenters, would excite no other motions in the minds of Church-Protestants than those of indignation or contempt: and the same would be their dispositions with regard to Dr. Middleton’s performance, if they would make use of the same weights and measures in our case as in their own”.<sup>2</sup>

In due course the book was published, and then came the storm. Dr. Middleton, indeed, attempted an answer in the preface of the fourth edition of his work, but this did not appear till 1741, meantime a more convenient method of silencing his adversary was found in the penal laws.

It is unfortunate that no particulars of these proceedings have been preserved. Barnard, who from his long intercourse with Dr. Challoner, had every opportunity of learning the details of his life-history, is always disappointing where facts are most wanted, though by the diffuseness of his rhetoric he reminds the impatient reader of Falstaff’s “but one halfpenny-worth of bread to this intolerable deal of sack”. Stripped of all circumlocution he says that in Dr. Challoner’s reference to the Royal Arms Dr. Middleton and his friends “thought they had found a convenient handle to prosecute him as a person disaffected to his sovereign,” and that his friends urged him “to retire from the impending storm, to which he at length with reluctance consented”.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> P. xx.<sup>2</sup> P. xxiii.<sup>3</sup> *Life of Challoner*, p. 66.

Dr. Milner, who expressly states in his *Life of Challoner*, that he had not seen Barnard's work, confirms the accuracy of his statement, his account being as follows:—

“It was not in the power of Dr. Middleton, with all his store of ancient learning and all his powers of language, to give anything like an answer to the arguments above stated: but in return he was enabled to bring in the penal laws to the aid of his defective logic and theology. In short, the situation of Dr. Challoner, after the publication of this *Catholic Christian Instructed*, with the preface to it, became so much exposed to danger, which others shared together with him, that he was advised to retire out of the kingdom for a certain space of time.”<sup>1</sup>

That Challoner was in fact threatened with legal proceedings is clear by his own statement. In the preface to his next controversial work, published five years later, he says that if any one will undertake a reply “’tis hoped he will be a generous adversary,” and not “call in to his assistance the *Brachium seculare* as some have done, or otherwise seek by violence to stop the mouth of truth and suppress its light”.

His enforced retirement from London at this time was the more inconvenient because, as we have seen, he was now the Vicar General of Bishop Petre.<sup>2</sup> But under the circumstances his withdrawal for a time at least, at whatever inconvenience to himself and others, was probably the wisest course, and he decided to take the opportunity of revisiting his old home at Douay.

It is not easy to fix the date of his departure from England. He was in London as late as 15th September, 1737, when he addressed a letter to Mr. Tunstal at York on the practice of

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Bishop Challoner*, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> It was probably in this capacity that he wrote two letters of this date which have survived in the Westminster Archives, one in his own handwriting dated 8th July, 1738, the other a copy dated 13th Nov. in the previous year. They are addressed to a recalcitrant priest or ecclesiastical student, but as they are lengthy and relate to an affair the circumstances of which are unknown, it has seemed useless to print them in full. The only personal touch which throws any light on Challoner's own character is the conclusion of the earlier letter. “Pardon me, Sir, if anything here appears too harsh. Don't answer by way of writing. I don't love epistolary contentions. But if by conversation I can be any ways serviceable I shall be glad to see you.”

the London clergy with regard to mixed marriages.<sup>1</sup> His arrival at Douay would in earlier days have been entered in the college diary, but Dr. Witham was now within a few months of his death, and the faltering writing of his last sparse entries bear witness to his enfeebled condition. During these months he entered only the most necessary details. Thus it happens that Dr. Challoner disappears entirely from sight for a time, and there is no record of his movements till we find him once more in London.

His visit to Douay must have been a great consolation to Dr. Witham, who had long felt the burden of his office far too heavy, and who now realised that death was near. Two years before his death he wrote to Mr. Hind:<sup>2</sup> "I have indeed from the first six years, that I experienced the weight of this burthen too heavy for my weak shoulders, begg'd several times of the Congreg. de Propag.; of several of our Protectors, of our Bishops, etc. and very lately, to get me eased of that office and charge of President by reason of my age and infirmities as well as by reason of the complaints against me and my administration, but all of them have been hitherto deaf to my remonstrances. You cannot wish for it more than I do, as I wrote lately to a Senior in our house, that I was in the like case as St. Paul when he writt that *prae tristitia et dolore cordis mei taederet me etiam vivere.*"

The wearied-out old man saw in Dr. Challoner one to whom he would willingly see the care of the college committed, and if Challoner could no longer work in London it was a suitable opportunity to procure his appointment as President of Douay. He accordingly sent his name, together with that of Rev. Richard Kendal, to the Congregation of Propaganda, begging that one of the two might be appointed to succeed him;<sup>3</sup> and he moreover wrote to the Nuncio at Brussels, to whom the final appointment was committed, to say that his own personal choice would rest upon Challoner. Thus it seemed likely early in 1738 that Challoner's London life was finally at an end and that he would begin a new career as President of Douay.

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Mr. Tunstal, 15th Sept., 1737, Ushaw MSS., vol. i.

<sup>2</sup> Letter dated 22nd Sept., 1736, Oscott MSS., Stonor Papers, fol. 332.

<sup>3</sup> Petition of the Agents of the English Secular Clergy to Propaganda concerning the election of a new President of Douay College, Oscott MSS., Challoner Collection.

## CHAPTER VII.

### ELECTION AND CONSECRATION AS BISHOP.

1738-1741.

BISHOP PETRE, who since the death of his predecessor in 1734 had governed the London District, had never felt himself equal to the burden of his office. When first named as coadjutor to Dr. Giffard, who held him in high regard, he protested earnestly against his promotion. After his consecration, his first act was to state in his official letter of acknowledgment to the Holy See,<sup>1</sup> "that he had felt himself altogether averse to accepting such an important post, and that he would never have consented to overcome his determination to refuse it, unless for the importunities of his brethren, and especially Dr. Giffard". This was in January, 1722, and by the middle of the year he had already determined to resign the office which he had held for barely six months; and it needed a special appeal from Bishop Giffard to the Holy See to induce him to reconsider his decision. Five years later he again attempted to resign, and once more was only prevailed upon to remain by the united efforts of the Nuncio at Brussels and the Congregation of Propaganda. When at length the aged Bishop Giffard died, Dr. Petre wrote to Propaganda begging the Congregation to appoint another successor to the London District, and to relieve him from the burden. Once more his request was refused, but though his piety and humility marked him out as one spiritually worthy of the episcopate, it is clear that one who so persistently shrank from the weight of responsibility was not really a suitable man for the post. From 1734 he had unwillingly continued to rule the London District, until at length he considered that the time had come for him to obtain the assistance of a

<sup>1</sup> Brady, *Annals of the Catholic Hierarchy*, p. 162.



coadjutor, and he saw in Dr. Challoner a man well fitted for the office. The two men were alike in their deep piety and earnest zeal for the salvation of souls; Dr. Petre, too, could appreciate and value Challoner's unassuming but solid learning, who, as he saw, though retiring and perhaps even timid by nature, had the quiet strength that the elder man lacked, the silent independence and self-reliance which sometimes marks very humble men. It is the self-reliance of one who knows well that he can do nothing by himself, but has learned by experience that God is never wanting, and who will calmly carry out what he understands to be the Divine Will, without undue regard to the opinions of men: and, indeed, throughout the whole of Dr. Challoner's life, the twofold working of nature and grace is very marked. Naturally prudent, and cautious even to excess, he still knew how to rule with firm determination, and he who was always anxious to efface himself, became, under God, a leader of men, and has been an abiding influence in the spiritual life of English Catholics.

The reason that impelled Dr. Petre to seek for the appointment of a coadjutor at this precise juncture seems to have been the narrow escape he ran of losing Challoner's services altogether, through Dr. Witham's action in suggesting his name to Propaganda as that of the fittest person to be President of Douay College. When, in due course, the vicars apostolic were consulted, Dr. Petre, taking alarm at this prospective loss to the London District, urged that Mr. Kendal should be appointed. Dr. Witham's own influence, however, was strong with the Nuncio at Brussels, who was empowered to make the appointment. The Nuncio finally appointed Dr. Challoner as president, and wrote to Bishop Stonor as senior vicar apostolic, enclosing the official notification of the appointment.

Bishop Stonor's account of this in a letter addressed apparently to Mr. Hornyold, still exists in the Oscott MSS.

"The disputes about the Presidency of Douay College," he writes, "are in a fair way of ending well, though in a manner much feared by my Brother Peters, for which reason he engaged strongly on Kendal's side. The Nuntio has at last declared in a letter to me, that having Mr. Witham's choice of Dr. Challoner, signed under his hand, he accordingly deputed the said Dr. Challoner for the President of that College; to which end a

letter to ye said Doctor was enclosed in mine to be sent to him by me, and I was desired to manage things in ye best manner I could with ye Bishop and ye Doctor, that ye latter might be dismissed immediately and repair to ye College. In pursuance of these orders, I have sent ye letter to ye Doctor and writ to ye Bishop.

"P.S.—I have had a letter as I expected from my Brother Peters. He . . . gives as yet no consent to ye going of Mr. Challoner, but only shews his own reluctance."<sup>1</sup>

The matter shortly became pressing, because within a few days of the date of this letter, Dr. Witham died. He passed away on the 29th of May, after ruling the college for twenty-three years, during which time he showed himself one of the greatest among the Presidents of Douay.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Challoner was now, in name at least, the head of that venerable college, and we cannot doubt that with his veneration for the martyrs and love for the college itself he would have gladly devoted the rest of his life to its interests. But it was not his destiny to take his place among the successors of Cardinal Allen. We have the evidence of the Petition by the Agents of the Secular Clergy, cited above, to the effect that his appointment was "to the satisfaction of everybody".<sup>3</sup> But this statement is too wide, since Dr. Petre was not satisfied at all. He represented to the Propaganda that the presence of Dr. Challoner was almost indispensable in the London District and that his assistance was absolutely necessary to him.<sup>4</sup>

Barnard, who had every opportunity for full knowledge, declares that the bishop only won this victory by demanding Dr. Challoner as his coadjutor-bishop, and threatening his own resignation if his request were refused.<sup>5</sup>

"This business continued in suspense for some time; each

<sup>1</sup> May 14, 1738, Oscott MSS., Stonor Papers, 409.

<sup>2</sup> A recent French writer, Mgr. Haudecœur, thus sums up his character. "Administrateur hors ligne, théologien solide, orateur distingué, d'une piété tendre et éclairée, d'une bonté d'âme exquise, il a laissé dans le Collège et dans tout le clergé anglais un souvenir impérissable et une réputation sans tache" (*Histoire du Collège Anglais*, 335).

<sup>3</sup> See also letter by Rev. Francis Petre, Vice-president of Douay, to Mr. Mayes at Rome, saying that the Nuncio had approved of Challoner's appointment, "so that the affair is determined unless Bishop Petre and Dr. Challoner prove unaccountably obstinate; so that we are all at ease" (5th June, 1738, Westminster Archives, *Epistole Variorum*, vol. xi., p. 45).

<sup>4</sup> Petition *cit. sup.*

<sup>5</sup> Barnard, *Life of Bishop Challoner*, pp. 69-70.

party pressing their petition, and each party endeavouring to persuade the other to relinquish their pretensions ; till at length Bishop Petre, fearing that he should lose him, urged his last,—which proved his efficacious,—argument ; and declared that as Dr. Challoner was the most proper person he could find in the whole body of the English Clergy to be his Coadjutor during his life, and to govern the district after his death, if they would not consent to his having him for his Coadjutor he would leave it to those concerned to find out a proper person to govern the district, and that he himself would relinquish his charge and pass the remainder of his days in a state of retirement.”

The bishop's original letter to Laurence Mayes is in the Westminster Archives, and is certainly an emphatic tribute to the value of Dr. Challoner's work in London.<sup>1</sup>

“I am told by a letter from Bishop Stonor that Mr. Witham has been prevailed upon, by what means or by whom I cannot absolutely determine, to sign a paper wherein he prefers and nominates the Doctor. To this nomination I earnestly desire that you make all the opposition that is possible, not only on my account, but for the good of my whole district, and I may truly say, of all in this mission : for he is frequently consulted by persons of all denominations in all districts. I cannot satisfy my duties without his help and counsel ; nor will presume to do it. If he be forced from me by Superior Powers, for I will never give my consent to his leaving this metropolis whilst I continue in my post, in that case be pleased to send me the usual form of resignation of my duty. Not only in that case, but at all times and hours I will most heartily and joyfully resign my office to him, because I am certain it will conduce more to the general good and satisfaction of the people of England, than his going to Douay, for the government of which there are many sufficiently qualified. . . . I writ by last post to Mr. Tempi to desire his opposition to the election of Dr. Challoner, and amongst other reasons I mentioned the danger and risk of losing many hundreds lately converted, if he were to be removed from hence. I concluded my letter with these words *Ille si mihi ablatu fuerit, ego muneri renuntiabo.*”

<sup>1</sup> May 15th, 1738. *Epistolæ Variorum*, vol. xi., p. 45. In the same volume are several other earlier letters relating to the matter written both by Dr. Witham and Mr. Petre his vice-president, who were in disagreement on the subject of the succession.

The venerable old Roman agent with the wisdom born of long experience, replied in a letter of gentle though firm remonstrance.<sup>1</sup>

“SIR:—

“In compliance with your orders of May 15th I have represented both by word of mouth and also in writing the motives you have for keeping with you Dr. Challoner, which, I own, are very strong, and it were to be most heartily wished another person could be found well qualified for the other important post, to the common satisfaction of all, and without so great a loss to that place. I really believe that Mr. Kendal, the other person proposed, deserves the good character you give him; but it seems he is not agreeable to many concerned, and great opposition is made against him: and this is what deserves your compassion and consideration. Give me then leave and freedom to give you my opinion with relation to the resolution you are ready to take, in case the worst happens, as you judge it. I am ready to suppose that things are like to go much worse there by the absence of Dr. Challoner, and this even to what degree you please, with all the bad consequences, which I am also ready to believe. Yet, after all, I do not see that this is a sufficient motive for your giving up your charge<sup>2</sup> or that anybody can approve a resolution of that kind. You are not the cause, you do not consent to the worst state of things there, on ye contrary you have given fair warning and have endeavoured to prevent all future disorders and ill consequences, and therefore can never be answerable for them before God or man. Besides, even in that other station, he may still be consulted: and may even make you visits from time to time, as formerly has been done to ye advantage of both places.”

Ultimately, however, Dr. Petre's urgent representations were successful and Propaganda proceeded to consider a fresh appointment. This was no easy matter, for the superiors of the college were unanimous in opposing Mr. Kendal, so that a further suggestion of names became necessary. The further

<sup>1</sup> Laurence Mayes to Bishop Petre—draft letter, no date, Westminster Archives, 1740-45.

<sup>2</sup> In the original *charge* is struck out and an illegible contraction substituted. This cannot, however, affect the sense of the passage.



list included the Rev. Francis Squibb, known as Petre, the existing vice-president and procurator of the college; Dr. William Thornburgh, a Doctor of Douay University, and a very popular man; the Rev. Francis Petre, nephew of the bishop and afterwards Vicar Apostolic of the Northern District; and one "Mr. Scott," whose real name was William Scott Green, and who ultimately became President on the next vacancy, twelve years later.

Bishop Petre preferred his own nephew, but he hastened to assure Bishop Stonor that "he did not oppose the other proposed, in order that Challoner might be left to him". In the event Dr. Thornburgh was appointed, a choice that was entirely justified by his quiet and successful rule.

As soon as this point was settled in the early part of 1739 Bishop Petre pressed forward his petition for the appointment of Dr. Challoner as coadjutor. The letter to the Pope in which he made this request is remarkable both for the extraordinarily high estimate of Challoner's character and powers which it expresses, and for the almost prophetic strain of the last passage in which he foretells that, if appointed, Challoner would be regarded in the future as a shining light in the Church, a notable leader of his people and an example to all.

The following is a translation of the original draft now in the Westminster Archives.<sup>1</sup>

"MOST HOLY FATHER,

"Urged by advancing years I most humbly desire that the Reverend Richard Challoner may be granted to me as my Coadjutor. For I am now in my sixty-eighth year, when, besides the weakness of body which I feel to be growing upon me daily, I recognise that I am in a measure breaking down and am thus incapacitated from the labour and care necessary in tending so large a flock, whose spiritual government calls for a Pastor of vigorous age, who can bring to the task all his strength and powers. He has scarcely reached his forty-ninth year, but by his many remarkable gifts of mind, his great humility and gentleness, by his assiduous fidelity in reclaiming sinners to the way of life taught by the Gospel and to the

<sup>1</sup> Letter, Bishop Petre to Pope Clement XII., 10th April (O.S.), 1739.



truths of our religion, by his marvellous power in preaching, in instructing the ignorant and in writing books both spiritual and controversial, he has won not only the esteem but the veneration of all who have either heard him preach or who have read his books. And so, I seem to myself justified in my conviction that out of all whom we have on our mission I could not choose any one as Coadjutor more welcome or more acceptable to my flock and to all Catholics. And I am persuaded that he, who in zeal for souls and in learning will prove himself equal to, and perhaps greater than, all that have gone before him, will be regarded as a shining and burning Light in the Church, a Leader beyond all cavil, and an Example to all labouring in our vineyard. By this estimate and expectation of Richard Challoner, Doctor in Theology of the University of Douay, which I have long had implanted in my mind, I am led to the hope that this, my humble suppliant petition, may be favourably received. And I confess that to have it granted would be to me a consolation and help past all belief.

"And now I humbly beg the Apostolic Benediction for myself and the flock committed to me,

"Being the most humble and dutiful servant of your Holiness,

"BENJAMIN, Bishop of Prusa and Vicar Apostolic.

"LONDON, 10th April (Old Style), 1739."

The application came before Propaganda on the 13th of July, and was finally granted by the Congregation and approved by the Pope on the 21st of August. On the 12th of September a brief was issued appointing Dr. Challoner Titular Bishop of Debra *in partibus infidelium*, and this was followed on the 14th of September by a further brief making him Coadjutor to Bishop Petre with right of succession to the London District.<sup>1</sup>

But though the matter was settled with Pope and Propaganda to Dr. Petre's entire satisfaction, that worthy prelate had now to meet quite as serious an obstacle in the form of Dr. Challoner's own extreme reluctance to accept the dignity. He did not content himself with asking to be excused, but pointed out what had been overlooked by all—that, having

<sup>1</sup> Brady, *Annals of the Catholic Hierarchy*, p. 166. English writers speak of the See as "Debra" or "Debora" indifferently.

been born and brought up in heresy, he was subject to a canonical disqualification for the Episcopate.

Speaking of the contest as to whether Dr. Challoner should be President of Douay or Coadjutor of the London District, Barnard says: "While this was in agitation, Dr. Challoner seemed, to all outward appearance, as indifferent as if he was no way concerned in it. But when the point was determined, his humility and his fear of being promoted to a dignity and office, which is of such importance as to be dreaded even by Angels, manifested themselves, and urged him both to beg to be excused from accepting it and to alledge reasons for his being excused. . . . For this purpose when he found that the business was concluded between the contending parties, that the superiors of the College had given him up to Bishop Petre and that he was actually nominated Bishop of Debra; he alledged that he was an improper person to be made Bishop, being born of parents who were not members of the Catholic Church; and that he himself had professed the erroneous opinions of his parents."<sup>1</sup>

This obstacle was of course easily surmountable by Papal dispensation, and though the idea of a convert-Bishop was not so familiar then as it has since become,<sup>2</sup> such dispensation had as a fact been already granted in the case of Bishop Ellis who had been converted while still a boy at Westminster School. Dr. Petre accordingly applied for a dispensation in November, and Mazière Brady<sup>3</sup> cites a letter dated the 18th of November sent by Propaganda to the Assessor of the Holy Office on the subject. The petition stated that the father of the bishop-elect "lived and died in the Anglican heresy, and Richard Challoner himself, until he was about thirteen years old, had been brought up in that sect".<sup>4</sup>

But a long delay now occurred, and it was not till nearly a year later that the Holy Office issued the necessary dispensation.

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Dr. Challoner*, pp. 71-73.

<sup>2</sup> To the names of Bishops Ellis and Challoner have since been added those of Bishops Hay, Bramston, Griffiths, Weathers, Patterson, Coffin, Brownlow, Wilkinson and Cardinal Manning; of these Dr. Griffiths and Dr. Weathers were, like Ellis and Challoner himself, received into the Church in boyhood.

<sup>3</sup> *Annals of the Catholic Hierarchy*, p. 166.

<sup>4</sup> As a matter of fact Challoner's father was a Presbyterian, as we have seen, and the boy was presumably brought up in that denomination.

The original document, bearing the seal of the Inquisition and dated 8th October, 1740, is still preserved in the Archives of the diocese of Westminster. On the fourteenth of the following month a fresh decree was passed by Propaganda, which was approved by the Pope on the 16th, and expedited on the 19th; and the briefs were finally issued on the 24th of November.<sup>1</sup>

The official copy of the brief appointing Dr. Challoner Bishop of Debra does not seem to have been preserved, as the diocesan archives only contain the certificated copy of the brief which appoints him coadjutor to the Vicar Apostolic of the London District, with right of succession. It is a lengthy and technical document following the approved form. Having recited that Bishop Petre needs a coadjutor on account of his increasing age and feeble health, it formally appoints Richard Challoner to that office for the counties of Kent, Middlesex, Essex, Surrey, Hertford, Sussex, Berks, Bedford, Buckingham (the latter being spelt Bukinquam) and Hants, as well as the Isle of Wight, and the Islands of Jersey and Guernsey. From Dr. Mazière Brady's researches in the archives of Propaganda we learn that the Propaganda decree "granted Bishop Petre's *supplica* to be permitted to consecrate Dr. Challoner, the Bishop elect of Debra, etc., with the assistance of two priests, secular or regular, on a week-day *di officio doppio*, as it was inconvenient for priests to absent themselves from their own duties on Sundays or Holy days".<sup>2</sup>

The decrees were sent by way of Douay, for we find that the official copies of the briefs were certified by a notary apostolic in that town on the 9th of January. They reached England with little delay, for on the 29th of the same month the consecration took place.

The day was well chosen. It was the festival of St. Francis of Sales; and that great secular pontiff-saint, who spent his life in a country fallen into heresy, was a fitting patron for one who had now to sanctify his own soul in the episcopal state of perfection, as well as to labour for a scattered handful in a country delivered over to religious confusion. Such a patron Bishop Challoner faithfully strove to imitate. Like St.

<sup>1</sup> Brady, *loc. cit.*, p. 166. He adds that at Propaganda there is a memorandum to the effect that the previous briefs did not take effect.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 166.

Francis, whose work on the *Introduction to a Devout Life* he translated into English, he laboured much by writing books ; like him he was assiduous in preaching, and like him he held as his favourite topic the Love of God. His spirit of prayer, his skill in leading souls in the easy ways of Divine Love, his charity to the poor, even the persecutions he underwent, are all echoes from the life of that saint, whose duty as well as whose dignity was so like his own. Even his zeal for the conversion of this land, so natural in an Englishman, can be found in the life of his patron who once cried out, " Ah, who will give me the wings of a dove and I will fly to the King, into that great island, formerly the country of Saints, but now overwhelmed with the darkness of error. If the duke will permit me I will arise and go to that great Ninive, I will speak to the King and will announce to him with the hazard of my life, the word of the Lord." <sup>1</sup>

There is no record of the consecration. We do not even know the names of the two priests, who stood beside the elect in place of bishops-assistant, as permitted by the decree. We only know that it was in the small hidden convent at Hammersmith that Bishop Petre consecrated his coadjutor. That spot had been Catholic ground since the time of Charles II. Then it was a manor belonging to Queen Catherine of Braganza and she had established there a community of nuns. Here they had kept a school for young ladies, and while going in and coming out, in the dress ordinarily worn by gentlewomen of that day, they had kept the secret of their religious life. The house next to theirs—remembered by Catholics yet living as Cupola House—was the country-seat of the Portuguese Ambassador, so that there were no curious neighbours to spy upon their way of life, but friends in high places who could render them good service. In their chapel, and probably in the presence of the few nuns who composed the community, Dr. Challoner received the fulness of the priesthood ; his brow was bound with what our Saxon forefathers called the Chrism-fillet, and with the sacred Chrism itself his head was anointed and consecrated—*coelesti benedictione in ordine Pontificali*—with the blessing of heaven unto the Pontifical dignity. In secrecy the beautiful rite of the *Pontificale* was carried out ;

<sup>1</sup> Alban Butler, *Lives of the Saints*, 29th Jan.





*The Right Rev.*      *Father in God*  
*John Henry D.D.*  
 BISHOP      of DERRY  
 and Vicar      of the Cathedral

London, Published, 1792, by the Author, at the Sign of the Anchor, in Pall Mall.





the crozier was entrusted to his hand; the ring blessed and placed upon his finger; the mitre set upon his head, and all things performed in order, until that final prayer in which the Church prays that "this servant, whom God, the Faithful Shepherd and Ruler of all, has chosen to preside in His Church, may do such service in word and example, that, with the flock committed to his care, he may come unto Eternal Life". And then, when all was over and all traces of the ceremony were hidden away, the little company would disperse, consecrator and consecrated alike would put aside their ecclesiastical dress and in the ordinary lay attire of English gentlemen, return quietly to London, thankful if they might fulfil the duties of their sacred office unmolested, though in disguised and secret ways.

It may be suitable and in place here to collect such scattered details as have survived, from which we may make some picture of the new bishop and his manner of life. Dr. Petre lived usually in the country, dwelling at his ancestral home of Fithlers in Essex, not far from Ingatestone. But Bishop Chaloner lived always in London, never owning a house of his own, but lodging with a Catholic householder, Mrs. Hanne, and paying a regular sum for his board. By this means he not only avoided the trouble and extra expense involved in keeping house, but he escaped from being summoned to serve on Juries or to fill Parochial offices. He remained an inmate of Mrs. Hanne's home for nearly, if not quite, the whole period of his forty years' episcopate. As early as 1748 letters are addressed to him at her house, and more than thirty years later, at the time of the Gordon riots, which took place shortly before his death, he was still residing with her. She did not, however, occupy the same house the whole of this period. During the first years he was a bishop, his address was Devonshire Street, near Chapel Street, Holborn. Afterwards Mrs. Hanne moved first to Red Lion Street, then to Lamb's Conduit Street and finally to Gloucester Street, Queen Square, where the bishop died. His biographers all agree in stating that one of his reasons for adopting this manner of life was that, by reducing his expenses to a definite and regular sum, he could be more free in dispensing charity. And Milner recalls how for this purpose "he himself lived in that poor and humble style, in which we have all

beheld him, barely allowing himself the indispensable necessities of life, whilst through his hands flowed an inexhaustible stream of bounty to the necessitous of different descriptions".<sup>1</sup> In this mortified life he was joined by two or three of his priests who lived in the same house and acted as his chaplains.

Minute accounts of his daily life have been handed down to us by each of the three biographers who wrote with personal knowledge of him, and these accounts are reproduced here in full, despite their length, because in these matters the statements of eye-witnesses bring us closer to the man and his surroundings, than any generalised description could do.

From his methodical and equable temperament resulted a very regular distribution of his time, and Barnard gives the following detailed account of the way in which he was accustomed to spend his day.<sup>2</sup>

"From the time of his being advanced to the Episcopal Dignity till the day of his death, this was the constant distribution of his time. Summer and winter he rose at six; and giving his first thoughts to God, and employing them in pious ejaculatory prayers till he was dressed; he then employed a whole hour in Meditation, on one or other of the pious subjects set down in his Meditations: but chiefly, as he therein recommends, insisting upon the pious affections and resolutions excited in his soul by the consideration of the proposed subject. This served as fuel to that increasing fire of divine love which burned so ardently in his breast. And this was succeeded by his immediate preparation for, and celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, which he always began at eight o'clock; but on Sundays and Holydays he began it at nine o'clock, and always made it his practice on those days to preach on some Text contained in the Gospel of the day. This being finished and his usual prayers said, to return thanks to God for his having partaken of the precious body and blood of His Son in this divine Sacrament; if it was not a Fast day he took his breakfast at nine o'clock; after which he recited with great recollection, attention and devotion, the little hours of the Divine Office, continually endeavouring to excite in his soul, sentiments of faith, hope, love, desire, humility, contrition and other affections, corresponding to the words made use of by

<sup>1</sup> P. 35.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Dr. Challoner*, pp. 130-133.

the inspired writers of the Holy Scriptures, from which that Office is taken. After which he was ready to attend to any business concerning which any person might want to apply to him. But if no one wanted him, he then sat down to write something for the instruction and edification of his flock, or to answer Letters which he had received from different parts : still keeping his eye fixed on God, and from time to time raising his heart to Him by short ejaculatory prayers and acts of divine love. When tired with writing he would take a few turns backward and forward in his apartments ; then take some pious book to read ; say some prayers ; or sitting in his chair contemplate on some pious subject ; and then return again to his writing. At one o'clock he used to say the evening part of the Divine Office ; which finished, he used either to say some vocal prayers or else employ himself in Meditation till two ; when, with his Chaplains, he sat down to dinner ; at which time he unbent a little his mind from that close application ; and was always very cheerful and agreeable ; discoursing with them upon different subjects and endeavouring to inspire them likewise with a spirit of Christian cheerfulness. If any of them had met with any mortifying or disagreeable occurrences ; he would rally them, and endeavour to rouse their drooping spirits, and remind them that through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God, that they ought not to imagine things will always go on according to their wishes and inclinations : but to put their trust in God, and expect light, assistance and redress from Him, who hath delivered and doth deliver us out of great dangers, and who, if we confide in Him, will yet also deliver us.

“ Dinner being finished, and about half an hour's more conversation ; if the weather was fine, or permitted it, he would usually take one of his Chaplains with him, either to go and visit some friend, or to take a walk in the fields for the benefit of the air. But he made it his invariable practice, before ever he quitted his house, to say a short prayer to beg that the protection and the blessing of God might attend him in his excursion. His time of returning home was between five and six o'clock, when he was ready to attend those who wanted him : and from thence till supper-time, which was at nine o'clock, he employed his time in giving spiritual advice to

those who applied to him, in reading, Meditation, and saying the Divine Office, and in doing what other business he had in hand. After supper and a little conversation, he said his prayers, examined his conscience concerning the manner in which he had discharged the duties of that day; endeavoured by lively acts of the Theological Virtues to put himself into the condition in which he desired to be found at the hour of his death, lest he should not live to see the morning; resigned himself into the hands of God, and then composed himself to rest under His divine protection."

Charles Butler, who knew the bishop well during the latter years of his life, having given a similar account of his daily routine,<sup>1</sup> adds:—

"He retained to the last his practice of early rising, and of celebrating every day the divine mysteries. The same administration of instruction and of the sacraments to the poor individually, which he had practised before his elevation to the Episcopal dignity, he could not, after that time practise; but the poor were still his peculiar care. They thronged to his house at all hours, and trespassed most unmercifully on his time; but they were always kindly received, and when it was in his power, always relieved. His behaviour to them was not only kind but respectful. . . . He kept up his practice of paying short evening visits to numbers of his flocks. In these he was always accompanied by one of his clergy." "Two or three of his clergy," the writer says elsewhere, "generally resided with him. These were always eminent for their active discharge of missionary duty; they particularly exerted themselves in administering the comforts of religion to the poor, the sick and the prisoners. . . . He said his office with his Chaplains; these were the happy hours of his life. It was his delight, after the agitation and hurry of business to repeat with them, the tender and soothing psalms, hymns and prayers of which it is composed. By this, any ruffle of the day was quickly smoothed, and his mind, fatigued by business or study, soon recovered its freshness and elasticity. The devotion, with which he said the office, and the spiritual delight which he found in it, were visible. A priest, on a sudden influx of business, which he saw would occupy him through the whole day, exclaimed,

<sup>1</sup> Butler, "Life of Dr. Challoner," *Cath. Mag.*, vol. i., p. 656.



'Thank God! I have said my office'. 'I thank God,' said Dr. Challoner, 'that I have this pleasure to come.'"<sup>1</sup>

In a life thus devoted entirely to the service of God there was no room for merely human interests, or rather all human interests in his eyes either were viewed in their relation to God or became of no account. For him there was nothing in life except his desire for the love, the presence and the greater glory of God. The total absence of any reference to external topics in his letters is due solely to this. It was not that he deliberately excluded such matters. It was only that he did not think about them. They had no place in his life, and he forgot even himself in the one great passion of his soul. Therefore it was that he, who was so indifferent to the sayings and doings of his generation regarded simply in themselves, was profoundly moved as soon as ever the interests of God were concerned. Bishop Milner dwells much on this point:—

"That indifference to the objects of sense, and to everything that engages the attention of the world, which seemed to approach to a degree of apathy in this saint-like old man, gave place to the quickest attention and to the warmest feelings of youth, whenever the interests of God were concerned or the salvation of a soul was at stake. Dead to every other impression, how easy was it, by touching upon this string, to agitate his soul to its very centre, and to dissolve all its firmness in a flood of tears? How often in particular has this happened to him in the sacred tribunal of penance, where he has wept for those who had perhaps never wept for themselves, and taught them, by the greatness of his own grief, the greatness of their spiritual miseries, and the dreadful malice of mortal sin?"<sup>2</sup>

It was in moments like these that the inmost passions of the soul flamed forth, as it were, and one can see down into the intense life that burned under the calm, serene exterior. It was so in his preaching: "To conceive the force and the unction with which he announced this sacred word, or to form an idea of the fire, which, through all the frost of age, then darted from his countenance, and animated his weak and emaciated frame, you must, my brethren, have seen him and heard him on those occasions; in short he was quite a different man when

<sup>1</sup> Butler, *loc. cit.*, p. 655.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Milner, *Funeral Discourse on the Death of Bishop Challoner*, pp. 9-10.

seated in the chair of truth, and charged with the interests of his Divine Master, from what he was at every other time".<sup>1</sup>

By recent generations of Catholics who know him only from his writings—books written, we must remember, in a stiff and formal age—he has come to be regarded as the very prototype of the ancient English Catholics and their solid austere piety. The type commands respect, and even admiration, though there is more than a suspicion in the modern mind that in practice such devotion must have been solemn and frigid, and that those who practised it must have been dull, though doubtless worthy men. Yet such a view does not do adequate justice to the interior life of this old school of Catholics. Though their piety was guarded in expression, it was nevertheless fervent and intense. It is true that it showed itself rather in regularity of sober observance than in a multiplicity of pious practices, but then they were more concerned with devotion than with "devotions". The staple of their spiritual life lay in the exercise of the theological virtues, in systematic habits of mortification, and in the vigilant practice of Christian charity, both in word and deed. They may, indeed, seem wooden and dry to our more expansive age, but that is largely because they instinctively shrank from any manifestation of self in religion and considered self-repression as one of the first principles of the devout life. Yet it is this very characteristic of their virtue that causes it to be now regarded as formidable and austere, if not unsympathetic. Even the stately phrases of their prayers fall on our ears with a strange and unfamiliar sense of ceremoniousness. Tenderness and quick sympathy are, perhaps, the last qualities with which we are likely to credit them, and yet these qualities were in no way wanting to their spiritual life. It is, in fact, just these two qualities which seem to have distinguished Bishop Challoner, and which make themselves felt in page after page of his *Meditations*.

In the portrait of him, now at St. Edmund's College, Old Hall, a picture painted when he was sixty-eight years of age, we have strong corroboration of the testimony of those who had looked on the man himself and spoken with him.<sup>2</sup> The quick, bright eyes, almost boyish in their keenness, and the

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Milner, *Funeral Discourse on the Death of Bishop Challoner*, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> See the frontispiece to this volume. Barnard states that this picture is a good likeness. In his personal description of the bishop he adds that he was about five feet ten inches in height and of a fair complexion.

sensitive, tremulous mouth are convincing in their evidence. We are sure as we look in his face that this man was not wanting in quickness of perception, or readiness of response. Clearly, he was not one of those dry, didactic, yet often obtuse men who plod along in a circumscribed and dreary routine beyond which they see and understand nothing. Looking on this picture, to which no reproduction does real justice, we better understand his character as described to us by those who knew him. We realise all that they mean when they speak of his "tender compassion for the weakness and frailties of mankind; that sweetness of speech and behaviour which gained the affection of all who knew him, and by which he led them to the love of God".<sup>1</sup> Or when they write of the "sweetness and affability of his discourse,"<sup>2</sup> or tell us how "The mildness and modesty, which were the distinctive marks of Dr. Challoner's character, were visible in his countenance and attracted every heart to him".<sup>3</sup> Looking at this picture we understand how it happened that when reading aloud to some of his priests the life of that apostle of charity, St. Vincent of Paul, he faltered and broke off—unable to read for his tears.

So, too, when we read, as in the passage quoted above, from Barnard's *Life*, how every moment of the day, not otherwise occupied, was devoted to prayer, we must not understand that he appointed numerous hours for a sort of routine of devotion, but rather that in every free moment his soul sped back, as it were, into that Divine Union, in which his whole inner life, his real life, was spent. Like those three great Saints, whose lives or whose writings he himself translated for the use of his people, St. Augustine, St. Teresa, and St. Francis of Sales, his life, even in this world, was already a life of intimate and uninterrupted communion with God. With St. Augustine he might speak of "This boon that I should be at peace in Thee, that thou shouldest enter into my heart and intoxicate it, that I should forget my evils and clasp Thee, my one and only good".<sup>4</sup> With St. Teresa he might say: "Ever since I saw the great beauty of Our Lord, I never saw any one who in comparison with Him seemed even endurable or that could occupy my thoughts".<sup>5</sup> While his own life was a practical illustration of

<sup>1</sup> Barnard, *Life*, p. 276.

<sup>2</sup> Milner, *Funeral Discourse*, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Butler, *Life*, loc. cit., p. 655.

<sup>4</sup> *Confessions*, I., iv., 2.

<sup>5</sup> St. Teresa, *Autobiography*, cap. 37.

that sentence of St. Francis: "Our spirit giving itself thus to the company, privacy and familiarity of our God, will be all performed with His perfections".<sup>1</sup>

That this was the habitual attitude of his soul we see in his habit of ejaculatory prayer. "In the very midst of business," writes Barnard, "he frequently raised both his heart and eyes to God by short ejaculations, which could frequently be perceived by those who happened to be in his presence. . . . And he made it his constant and invariable practice (which all his acquaintance observed) to renew the love of God in his heart whenever he heard the clock strike, by signing himself with the sign of the Cross, and saying, *O my God, teach me to love Thee in Time and Eternity*: which practice he also recommended to all the faithful, and for that reason inserted it in the Catechism which he published for the instruction of children."<sup>2</sup>

Without seeking to penetrate into the secret places of that supernatural intimacy, we may surmise that in his prayer he was visited with unusual marks of divine favour. Incidents occurred, and will in their place be recorded, in which he spoke of things yet to come with strangely definite knowledge. He has left no word of his spiritual experiences, but his friend and biographer does not hesitate to allude to "extraordinary lights and graces which he possessed".<sup>3</sup> He himself was most reticent on the subject, and Milner says: "God alone was witness to the favours he received in this heavenly exercise, but to see him only at his ordinary vocal prayers and to observe the respect, the recollection and the fervour with which he performed them, was enough to inspire the most tepid with devotion. To speak the truth this spirit of recollection was so familiar to him that he never seemed to lose sight of God amidst the most intricate business, and thus strictly fulfilled the precept of Christ Himself of '*praying always and without ceasing*'".<sup>4</sup>

Next after his devotion to prayer comes his diligence in almsgiving, of which some mention has already been made. His own slender means were entirely devoted to this purpose. Indeed his last spoken word, when he was seized with his fatal illness, was the one word "Charity," which he stammered forth as he indicated the money then on his person. His spirit of

<sup>1</sup> St. Francis, *Introduction to a Devout Life*, ii., 13.

<sup>2</sup> Barnard, *Life*, p. 262.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 276.

<sup>4</sup> Milner, *Funeral Discourse*, p. 18.



CATHARINE, LADY STOURTON.





charity was contagious and he was entrusted by others with the disposal of large sums. Two well-known Catholics have been singled out for special mention as making him their almoner. The one was Edward, Duke of Norfolk, who, with the lavish generosity which remains in our own times the characteristic of that noble family, placed large sums at his service; the other was Catherine, Lady Stourton,<sup>1</sup> of whom Charles Butler wrote: "She possessed an immense fortune and lived in a style of expense far below her rank in Society; but her fortune sank under her charity". He adds the names of two other ladies—the Dowager Lady Arundel and Mrs. Southcote—as enabling Dr. Challoner by their means to help the poor. But of the bishop's own exertions he says: "Attention to the poor could not be carried further than it was, at all times, carried by him. It was his favourite duty; they had the most free access to him; he relieved or procured relief for them to the utmost of his power."<sup>2</sup>

That his charity might be discerning he was at pains to organise it, and among his other foundations we have to include the Benevolent Society for the Relief of the Aged and Infirm Poor which still carries on its useful work. The method in his almsgiving may also be traced in some rough memoranda in one of his note-books, still preserved in the diocesan archives. Among other items is a list of small amounts paid for the discharge of particular prisoners from various jails, including the Marshalsea, Newgate and the Counter; besides sums of two guineas and three guineas at a time, given to his priests "for helping prisoners".<sup>3</sup>

One more marked quality deserves notice. It is his humility and spirit of self-effacement. Others might look on him as a Saint, but his own absence of self-consciousness preserved in him a child-like simplicity. "This humility was so visible

<sup>1</sup> Catherine, Lady Stourton was the daughter of Bartholomew Walmesley of Dunkenhagh. She was twice married, first in 1711 to Robert, seventh Lord Petre, by whom she became the mother of Robert James, eighth Lord Petre; and secondly, in 1733, after twenty years' widowhood, to Charles, fifteenth Lord Stourton. She died 31st January, 1785, at the age of eighty-eight.

<sup>2</sup> *Life, cit. sup.*, p. 649.

<sup>3</sup> As a specimen of these entries we may extract the following:—

Jan. 15, 1755	for discharging	DENYS STARKEY	from YE MARSHALSEA	£5. 4. 6.
Feb. 26,	do.	JOHN WILLIAMS	from NEWGATE	15s. 10d.
— 27,	do.	NICH WILSON	„ YE MARSHALSEA	£2. 18. 6.
May 21,	do.	JAMES MACDONALD	from YE COUNTER	£1. 1. 0.

and striking in his whole life and behaviour," writes Milner, "that it was almost impossible to approach him without feeling its influence."<sup>1</sup> Barnard tells us that "if at any time any one commended anything in him, he always received their commendations with a look which showed he was displeased".<sup>2</sup> His intimate conviction that it was only the grace of God which kept him from being a great sinner led him to regard himself in all sincerity as inferior to all. "What is it," he once asked, "but merely the free gift and grace of God that preserves us from being as wicked as the greatest sinner upon earth? Let us never presume to despise poor sinners, how abandoned soever, or to prefer ourselves before any of them; since whatever they are to-day, to-morrow they may be great penitents and great favourites of heaven."<sup>3</sup>

This spirit of self-distrust did not, however, prevent him from being stern when the occasion required it. At such times we are told<sup>4</sup> "his natural meekness and forbearance were turned into a holy indignation. He has been known to kneel to one of his clergy who thought he had not been treated by him as his merits deserved, but where the cause of the Church and of God's immutable truth was attacked or endangered he knew of no compromise and nothing could soften the inflexible severity of his mind."

Such was the bishop as he appeared to the men who knew him. Quotations and extracts from their descriptions have here been amassed, perhaps at the risk of tediousness. They may suggest that secret hero-worship which according to a modern writer is "the soul of all biography". But the truth is that without commanding genius, striking originality or other brilliant display, Bishop Challoner was a spiritual hero to the Catholics of his own generation, and all references to him in their literature, whether published in books or buried in archives, are marked with a strange sense of reverence.

If one needed a summary of his character as they recorded it, one need only look to the hymn in which the Church expresses her own ideal:—

Qui pius, prudens, humilis, pudicus,  
Sobriam duxit sine labe vitam.

—Holy, prudent, humble, modest, meek, and stainless.

<sup>1</sup> Milner, *Fun. Disc.*, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 268; *Meditations*, July 22.

<sup>3</sup> Barnard, *Life*, p. 266.

<sup>4</sup> Milner, *Life*, p. 26.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE GARDEN OF THE SOUL.

1740.

DURING the two years which elapsed between the unsuccessful effort to nominate Dr. Challoner as President of Douay, and his election and consecration as bishop, as described in the last chapter, very little indeed is known of his doings. But there is one work, which occupied him during a part of this period, which has contributed more than anything to keep his name in remembrance. This is the well-known prayer-book, the *Garden of the Soul*.

So popular, indeed, has been the *Garden of the Soul*, so varied have been the countless editions, so numerous the added features, that, at length, after 170 years it has been edited out of all recognition; and, to-day, it is represented by various books which have little in common but the name, and which differ from one another as much as they do from the original source.

It has even come to pass that, in the constant addition of new devotions and the consequent need of omitting some portion of the original contents to make room for the fresh matter, Dr. Challoner's original purpose has been lost sight of, with the result that though these modern editions are excellent prayer-books, they no longer embody the author's main idea.

For Dr. Challoner's *Garden of the Soul* was not a mere collection of prayers. It was designed to be a brief guide to the spiritual life, containing not prayers only, but information, instructions and much practical advice. English Catholics already possessed two standard prayer-books, the *Primer* and the *Manual*. That the *Garden of the Soul* was designed to supplement, rather than to supersede these, is clear from the

fact that long after he had published his own work, Dr. Challoner issued a new edition of the *Manual* carefully revised by himself.

To understand, then, quite what he intended to be the scope and function of the *Garden of the Soul* it will be necessary briefly to recall something of the history and character of the older books.

The *Primer*, which was first published by Richard Verstegan in 1599, was the direct descendant of the old pre-Reformation Primers or Books of Hours of Our Lady. The chief contents were the Little Office of Our Lady, the Office for the Dead, the Gradual and Penitential Psalms, the Litany of the Saints together with the short Offices of Holy Cross and of the Holy Ghost.<sup>1</sup> To these were added a large number of prayers, some of which were taken from the Sarum primer, the story of the Passion of Christ told by the four evangelists, and finally a large collection of antiphons, collects and hymns from the Breviary. The early editions were printed with the Latin on one page, faced by the English on the other. As issued from the great Antwerp printing houses of Plantin or Conings they are altogether beautiful little books with their scarlet and black letter-press and their delicate engravings, all reproduced in duplicate, one being set in the Latin text with its fellow upon the English page opposite. As the seventeenth century wore on, these dainty editions gave place to plainer and larger reprints. Sometimes, as in the sturdy London edition published in the reign of King James II., the Latin was omitted altogether so as to allow of a large bold type, but otherwise the contents of the book remained the same. It continued to be republished at intervals until the early part of the nineteenth century, but it has now fallen into disuse and is no longer known to English Catholics.

The *Manual* will demand somewhat closer attention at our hands, for Dr. Challoner himself had much to do with the later editions of this ancient work. It was in fact an older book than the *Primer*, though its early history remains very obscure in spite of the efforts made by Charles Butler and Dr. Lingard

<sup>1</sup> This little Office of Holy Cross was translated into English verse by Crashaw and included in his *Carmen Deo Nostro* (1652); but the poet's version never found its way into our books of devotion.



to throw light upon it.<sup>1</sup> That it was the work of an English priest and that an edition was published in 1595 are the earliest facts hitherto established: that it was the favourite prayer-book of Catholics during the persecution is known by unbroken tradition.

"For as much as concerns this book," says the writer of the preface to the later editions, "I shall only say it is that which the providence of Almighty God put into the hands of our ancestors to enable them to bear the assaults of many severe persecutions. It is that which comforted them in their imprisonment, inspired them with content in their poverty, accompanied them in their exile and rendered them cheerful even in death itself. . . . In a word it is that which led them (and will lead you too, if you make the same use of it) through the vicissitudes of this life to the unchangeable felicity of a better."

Dr. Lingard, working from a copy of the edition of 1614, deduced that "*The Manual* had been many times edited before 1614 and must have been originally published in the early part of the reign of Elizabeth '*by a devout and learned priest of our countrie*'".

The full title of this venerable prayer-book was *A Manual of Godly Prayers and Litanies newly annexed, taken out of many famous authors and distributed according to the dayes of the weeke. With a large and ample exercise for the morning and evening. Whereunto are added the Hymnes and Prayers for the principal feasts of the yeare, with a brieve forme of Confession and order to help at Mass.*<sup>2</sup>

The chief contents of the book are "An Exercise to be used every morning," followed by a form of Night Prayers and then a set of prayers for every day in the week, morning and evening, consisting of psalms, prayers, litanies and hymns. These occupy quite half the book, the rest of which is devoted to the Penitential psalms, Litanies of the Saints, Offices of Holy Cross and of the Holy Ghost, various prayers and meditations including devotions for Mass, Confession and Communion. The Hymns and Prayers for the Chief Festivals, together with

<sup>1</sup> Charles Butler, *Hist. Memoirs of Eng. Cath.*, 1st edition, ii., 307. Dr. Lingard, *Catholic Miscellany*, 1830, p. 129.

<sup>2</sup> Title-page of the edition printed in 1637 by John Cousturier of Rouen.

the Jesus Psalter and the Golden Litany, come at the end. The contents of the various editions, however, vary somewhat, though the main order is preserved.

In 1688 a new and revised edition of the *Manual* was published. Dr. Lingard conjectures on internal evidence that this was prepared by John Gother under the directions of the new vicars apostolic. This edition became the prototype of later reprints, so that Bishop Challoner stated that the *Manual* was *first* printed in 1688, a remark which is only true of its amended form. In the years that followed, it was again and again re-issued; Meighan the printer, publishing several editions before Bishop Challoner himself determined to bring out another revision.

For this purpose he took the "Prince of Wales's Edition" (1688) as the groundwork, and revised it, leaving the chief contents of the work unchanged except for minor alterations, but adding many of the prayers for Confession from the *Garden of the Soul*, and substituting bodily the prayers before and after Communion from that volume. He published his revision in 1758 under the title *A Manual of Prayers and other Christian Devotions. Revised and corrected with large additions by R— C— D.D.* The book was successful and later editions followed one another rapidly, at least nine of these being published before his death.<sup>1</sup>

But the *Manual* was purely and simply a book of prayers, and, as we have stated, the bishop wished in the *Garden of the Soul* to produce a book which should combine instruction with devotion. Hence he did not regard the two as covering the same ground, and as a matter of fact they long continued to enjoy popularity side by side. Nowadays the *Manual* has been forgotten, while the *Garden of the Soul* continues, though in somewhat modified form, to fulfil its original purpose.

So successful was this book in training up a large class of Catholics whose devotion was marked by a definite character, that in later days the expression "Garden-of-the-Soul Catholics" came to be employed as distinguishing the old hereditary members of the faith from those who entered the Church at the time of the Oxford Movement, and whose devotions under more

<sup>1</sup> Meighan published the editions of 1758, 1764, 1765, 1768, and 1771, and Coghlan those of 1775, 1778 and 1781, while the 1772 edition I have not seen.

directly Roman influence, such as that exercised by the Oratorians, were more fervid and expansive in expression. Perhaps this use of the name implied some sense of impatience at the steady-going undemonstrative methods of the old Catholics and their reluctance to receive with enthusiasm practices unfamiliar to them, but it also affords unconscious testimony to their thoroughness and solidity. A "Garden-of-the-Soul Catholic" went to Communion only at the eight Indulgences, but his preparation lasted for days before each feast, and his thanksgiving continued for days afterwards. He was regular in his morning and evening devotions and devoted much of his Sundays to prayer: he kept the fasts and abstinences of the Church rigorously, and was active and untiring in works of mercy: but on the other hand he was inclined to look with suspicion on devotions of recent introduction, especially when they involved exterior observances. His piety was deep and strong but very sober in character. Dr. Challoner himself had been brought up in this school and by the *Garden of the Soul* he did much to strengthen and perpetuate the tradition.

One result of the extreme popularity of the book among Catholics is that copies of the early editions have become extremely rare. The little volumes were so common and well known that no one thought it worth while to preserve them. Thus it comes about that the copy of the first edition belonging to Ratcliffe College is the only one known to exist, though doubtless others are lying hidden away in old libraries. In like manner an imperfect copy of the second edition belonging to the present writer is the only instance of that issue which long search has brought to light.<sup>1</sup>

The first edition bears the title, *The Garden of the Soul: or a Manual of Spiritual Exercises and Instructions for Christians, who living in the World aspire to devotion. Printed in the Year MDCCXL.*<sup>2</sup> There is no indication of the identity

<sup>1</sup> Incidentally it may be remarked that this copy proved to be the occasion of the present work being written. A casual purchase of the little book in Holborn led the writer first to inquire into the life of the author, then to write a short paper for a college club, and finally to study the subject for many years, with results now in the reader's hands.

<sup>2</sup> By the kindness of the Very Rev. Joseph Cremonini, O.C., President of Ratcliffe College, the first edition was entrusted to me for a long period for purposes of examination and collation with later editions.

of either author or publisher. Doubtless the name was suggested to the bishop by the popular Latin prayer-books, the *Hortus Animæ* and *Paradisus Animæ*, the underlying idea of which is common in Mystical Theology, and had been expressed in the Preface to the 1614 edition of the *Manual*, where it is said that the prayer-book was "a garden of the delicate and odorefforous flowers of sweet devotion".

To the *Garden of the Soul* the author prefixes no prelude but begins straightway with a course of solid instruction headed, "Christian Doctrine: or a Summary of Christian Faith and Morality". It embraces three sections: What every Christian must believe; What every Christian must do, in order to Life Everlasting; and Gospel Lessons to be pondered at leisure by every Christian Soul. This is followed by a list of the feasts and fasts, from which we gather that no less than thirty-six holidays of obligation were then observed throughout England.<sup>1</sup> The fasting days were also more numerous and were far more strictly observed then than now. For instance, every Friday in the year, except in Paschal-time and at Christmastide, was a fasting-day, and all Saturdays were days of abstinence.

The next portion of the book begins with "A Morning Exercise," but this again consists of instructions as well as of prayers. Then come the ten meditations written by St. Francis of Sales in the first part of the *Introduction to a Devout Life*. In the next place is given the important section headed "Instructions and Devotions for hearing Mass". Dr. Challoner's treatment of this is very interesting, as it shows the great importance he attached to an intelligent following of the ritual of the Mass by the people. Thus in the first place he gives a lengthy explanation of "What the Mass is and for what Ends it is to be offered" and then he proceeds to describe it in detail, mingling the instructions with prayers, so that we have a careful ex-

<sup>1</sup> In the London district there were only thirty-five, as St. Silvester's Day was not kept as a holyday. These were reduced by the Holy See to eleven, in the year 1777, the feasts of which the obligation had been suppressed being now known as Days of Devotion. These festivals include the Purification, Finding of the Cross, Conception of Our Lady, all Apostles' days except that of SS. Peter and Paul, the Feasts of St. George, Nativity of St. John Baptist, St. Anne, St. Lawrence, St. Michael, St. Stephen, Holy Innocents, St. Thomas of Canterbury, St. Silvester and the Tuesdays in Easter week and Whit week,



planation of each ceremony followed by a suitable prayer. The Ordinary of the Mass is not given at all, either in Latin or English.

The Mass is followed by "Other Devotions Proper to Sundays and Holidays," which consist of English versions of the *Te Deum* and several psalms and canticles, followed by the Universal Prayer, a paraphrase upon the Lord's Prayer and the Athanasian Creed. In these he adopted with slight alterations the translations found in the *Manual*. Vespers for Sunday and Compline are then given, but all in English: the *Manual* being again drawn upon for the rendering of psalms and hymns, though not without the introduction of considerable variations.

The next feature of the book is most interesting, as it is the first description of benediction given in any English prayer-book. At this time benediction was only in practice in the chapels attached to embassies or country-houses. From the directions which Dr. Challoner gives, however, we find that the rite was the same as that which we now use:—<sup>1</sup>

"When the Blessed Sacrament is taken out of the Tabernacle and set up to be seen by the People, the Quire sings *O Salutaris Hostia*, etc. After this, is usually sung some Psalm or pious Metre, according to the order of Superiors, or Discretion of the Officiant, or Exigence of the Times: Such as Psalm XIX. *Exaudi* for the King; Psalm XLV. *Deus noster refugium* for Peace; Psalm XC. *Qui habitat*, in time of Tribulation; the *Te Deum* in publick thanksgivings, etc. Then follows the Hymn of the Blessed Sacrament, *Pange lingua*, or at least the latter part of it, *Tantum ergo*."

After the Rite of Benediction the Penitential Psalms are set out, followed by Evening Devotions for Families, which include the Litany of the Saints—this being one of the evening devotions at Douay—and other night prayers. At the end of these, the author resumes his instructions, and there are long sections devoted to the consideration "of the ordinary actions of the day," "necessary virtues to be exercised every day" and "preservatives and remedies against sin". This portion of the book, which has disappeared from the modern editions, is in effect a miniature treatise on the spiritual life.

Next follow two long sections, "Instructions and Devotions

<sup>1</sup> P. 140.



for Confession," and "Instructions and Devotions for Communion," in both of which explanations and meditations are more prominent than the prayers. Worthy of remark is the method of Examination of Conscience before Confession. It is very long, very searching, and much more explicit than the forms now in use. It would seem to have been drawn up for penitents who did not approach the sacred tribunal very often and generally points to a less frequent use of the Sacrament of Penance than is now customary.

In the next section, Instructions and Devotions for the Sick, the prayers for once are longer than the advice. They are immediately followed by Prayers for the Dead, though in later editions the "Recommendation of a Departing Soul" was inserted at this place. The Litanies of the Holy Name and of Loretto, and the enumeration of the Mysteries of the Rosary conclude the volume.

From this brief analysis it will be seen how far the *Garden of the Soul* was from being only a prayer-book, and how completely it differed in scope from the *Manual* or the *Primer*.

The little book was from the first a popular success. Within a year the first edition was sold out, and a second was published in 1741. The third edition appeared in 1743, and within ten years of its appearance it was reprinted six times, with no alteration but the addition of two hymns, *Jesu dulcis memoria* and *Ave maris stella*.

The seventh edition, however, issued in 1757 bears on the title-page the statement that it has been "corrected and enlarged by the Author". The additions then made included the "Method of Serving at Mass," another form of Acts of Faith, Hope and Charity, "Instructions and Devotions for Confirmation," the "Recommendation of a Departing Soul," a section on Jubilees and Indulgences, and finally the *Jesus Psalter*. This was the final form of the book during the author's lifetime, but after his death new editions appeared. Thus by the year 1800 the Ordinary of the Mass in parallel columns of Latin and English is introduced. In the 1808 edition we find the Thirty Days' Prayer and in that of 1816 the "Litany for England". The 1818 edition has an appendix added "to render it more eminently useful," but this is relegated to the end of the book "in conformity to the wish of many, who from re-

spect for the Author, are pleased to see the *Garden of the Soul* purely in its original state”.

These additions did not always hold their ground in subsequent reprints, and the editions began to vary considerably from one another, not so much in the body of the work, as in the devotions added at the end. These variations became more marked when editions were published in provincial towns, such as Preston, Newcastle, Stockport, Wolverhampton and Manchester. The book was also reprinted in Philadelphia for America, and Irish editions appeared in Dublin. Publishers soon lost count of the various issues, and the bibliography grows very confused. Thus though the “ninth edition” was published in London in 1764, a so-called “eighth edition” was issued a year later by Stewart of Preston.

Until the time of Catholic emancipation, the substance of the book thus remained untouched, though considerable fresh matter was added. But about 1830 a new and amended edition was published at Birmingham, in which for the first time some of the bishop's instructions were omitted. In the preface we are told that “the present edition has been in some little altered from its previous form, by the leaving out of some things that appeared superfluous, and the insertion of others which were called for by the general practice of Catholics”. This reprint was issued with the “approbation of the venerable superior of the Midland District”.

From this time the disintegration of Dr. Challoner's original work has proceeded apace. Additions, which under the circumstances of a more public and expansive Catholic life than had been possible under the penal laws, were made, but at the cost of some portion of the original contents. In the time of Cardinal Wiseman the Stations of the Cross, *Bona Mors*, Devotions to the Sacred Heart, and Visits to the Blessed Sacrament were added. But to make way for these nearly all Dr. Challoner's scheme of instruction in the spiritual life has been sacrificed.<sup>1</sup> The work has tended to become more and more a

<sup>1</sup> The London edition issued by Messrs. Burns & Oates and the Dublin edition of Messrs. James Duffy & Co. still keep Dr. Challoner's name on the title-page and have managed to retain a certain amount of his original instructions. We may well believe that the bishop would have been specially delighted with the sixpenny editions of his book issued by the various Catholic publishers in such a good and attractive style.

book of prayers simply. It may be added that the influence of the *Garden of the Soul* on other prayer-books has been very marked, and it may be considered as the direct ancestor of such well-known and popular books as the *Golden Manual*, the *Church Manual* and the *Vade Mecum*. Nor will it be out of place to add that Dr. Challoner's own habitual practice of revising and republishing ancient works so as to render them suitable for his age, shows that he would be far from disapproving the numerous changes made in his prayer-book so as to fit it for modern use. Rather would he commend those who have seen to it that the book which helped the Catholics of the eighteenth century should be available in attractive and popular form to continue doing its good work in the twentieth.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE FIRST DAYS OF THE EPISCOPATE. VISITATION IN SURREY, SUSSEX AND HANTS.

1741.

THE first work of the new bishop after his consecration was to make a thorough visitation of the entire district. In this, London naturally claimed the first place, and for several weeks after his consecration he remained there to administer confirmation. From his own memoranda we gather that between Sexagesima and Pentecost he confirmed nine times in one place alone, and six in another, and throughout the whole period he seems to have held a weekly confirmation, usually on Wednesdays. The frequent repetition of the ceremony at the same spot was owing to the great caution which was necessary; the number of candidates on each occasion having to be strictly limited, lest attention should be drawn to the hidden meeting-places by any large concourse. In the bishop's notes we find five such meeting-places indicated, but he purposely refers to them in terms so obscure as to be almost unintelligible. They are mentioned as "Theob. Row," "Shaw's," "Fair Hatch," "Lad. Bish.," and "Hamm.". Of these the first is probably Theobald's Row, now Theobald's Road, Bloomsbury, in which neighbourhood the bishop lived. "Shaw's" may refer to his friend Gerard Shaw, who was a priest; "Fair Hatch" remains a mystery; "Lad. Bish." possibly indicated the house of Lady Bishop; while "Hamm." is certainly the convent at Hammersmith.

If the first three were not the actual places used as Mass-houses, they were probably of a similar character, garrets in obscure public-houses or in the back streets of out-of-the-way neighbourhoods. Probably the places of meeting were frequently changed for prudential reasons, and certainly such

secrecy was observed with regard to their whereabouts that hardly any information about them has survived.

The small inn known as The Ship in Little Turnstile, Lincoln's Inn Fields, was one of the houses Challoner used for this purpose. It has been narrated how he used to preach to a number of Catholics there, each person present sitting with a pot of beer on the table before him, so as to afford a pretext for the gathering in case of interruption. Father John Morris, S.J., who was at one time secretary to Cardinal Wiseman, states that the tradition handed down in the house of the vicars apostolic of London, was that these meetings used to take place on Sunday evenings, and that the floor of the room was partly movable, so that the people in two storeys could hear the preacher at the same time.<sup>1</sup> On other occasions Dr. Challoner would preach in still more incongruous surroundings. Bishop Milner used to relate that when a boy he had often heard him preach in a cock-pit which was hired for the purpose.<sup>2</sup> This may have been in Cock-Pit Alley, Drury Lane, where sermons are known to have been preached.

At all such gatherings, whether for Mass or for sermons, every precaution was taken against the intrusion of informers; admission could only be obtained by pass-words, and the actual services were held with bolted doors. It is a matter of regret that when the time of liberty came, those who had taken part in this cryptic worship neglected to leave more detailed accounts of the way in which they had met to adore God under such difficulties. The one description that we have of a secret Mass in eighteenth century London is so vivid and graphic, that it must be inserted here, though it relates to a somewhat later date. Fortunately the celebrant of the Mass described was Bishop Challoner himself, and the account tells how a young married couple, Mr. and Mrs. Marlow Sidney, were received into the Church and admitted to the Sacraments by him in just such a garret. The story was told long afterwards by Mrs. Sidney to her grand-daughter,<sup>3</sup> and though no dates are given, we may ascribe it on internal evidence to the

<sup>1</sup> *Catholic England in Modern Times*, p. 23. He adds that the little table used by the bishop, marked with circles by the pewter pots, was preserved till his time. All efforts to discover the table at the present day have, however, failed.

<sup>2</sup> *Husenbeth's Life of Milner*, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> *A Hundred Years Ago*, by Mrs. Barnewall (Burns & Oates, no date).



year 1771 or thereabouts.<sup>1</sup> But though this incident took place thirty years later than the time we are now describing, the salient features of the scene, and the surrounding circumstances must have been very similar on all occasions, so that the description will apply to almost any Mass in Dr. Challoner's lifetime, other than those celebrated in the ambassadors' chapels, or in those of the Catholic nobility.

The young couple in question, little more than boy and girl when first married, had been instructed by Mr. James Horne, one of the priests attached to the Venetian Embassy. He had arranged for them to be received into the Church by Bishop Challoner, and they were to make their first Communion and be confirmed on the same occasion. It was early on a Sunday morning, and many years later Mrs. Marlow Sidney described the scene to her grand-daughter in the following words:—

“We started from our lodgings at five in the morning to be present for the first time at a Catholic religious service, or at ‘Prayers’ as it was generally called, for the word ‘Mass’ was scarcely ever used in conversation. We arrived at a public house in some back street near the house in which Mr. Horne resided. I felt rather frightened, seeing some very rough-looking poor people as we passed through the entrance, though all were very quiet. These people, I was told, were Irish workmen who, with a few women, were assembled on that Sunday morning to hear ‘Prayers’ when they could be admitted. We hurried past them; but I could not help clinging to Marlow, having a sort of undefined fear of what was going to happen, for I had no inclination to laugh then. We mounted higher and higher, escorted by a young man whom Marlow had seen at the priest's house, who had come forward at once to conduct us. When we arrived at the top, the door of a garret was unlocked, and as we entered we saw at the furthest end what seemed a high table, or a long chest of drawers with the back turned toward us. A piece of carpet was spread before it by the young man, who after he had placed a few chairs and cushions in order, pointed out to us our seats. In a few

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Marlow Sidney afterwards became well known as a prominent Catholic, both in London and the North (Gillow, v., p. 505; *cf.* iii., p. 404). He and his wife both reached an advanced age, dying in 1839 and 1844 respectively.

minutes, the door opened, and the venerable Dr. Challoner, accompanied by Mr. Horne and another priest, entered the garret, the door of which was secured inside by the assistant, who then proceeded to unlock some drawers behind what I found was to be used as an altar, and take out vestments and other things requisite for the Church service. Water was brought to the Bishop, and from his hands we received our conditional Baptism, which had been fully explained to us. We then, one after the other, entered a sort of closet with the door open, and kneeling, received Absolution, having previously made our Confession to Mr. Horne. After returning to our seats, the Bishop put on a vestment and a mitre, and gave us a short and excellent exhortation. We then knelt before him, and he administered to us the sacrament of Confirmation. . . . Soon afterwards we heard the door-key turn, and several rough footsteps enter the garret; then some gentle taps, and words were exchanged between a powerful-looking Irishman, who kept his post close to it, and those outside, which were pass-words of admission. The key was again turned each time any one entered, and just before the Bishop vested himself to say Mass, bolts were drawn also, and no one else could pass into the garret. In the meanwhile, the young man in attendance had prepared all that was required for Mass, taken from behind what was used as the altar, which was covered with a linen cloth. A crucifix and two lighted candles were placed on it, and in the front was suspended a piece of satin damask, in the centre of which was a cross in gold lace. The ceremonies of the Mass had been explained to me by Marlow, who seemed to follow the Latin prayers as if he had been used to them all his life. We received the Holy Communion when notice was given to us, both the priests holding before us a linen cloth.

"When all was over, and I was praying to God to increase my faith, I heard the door-key turn once more, and all the rough footsteps leaving the garret. The Bishop having unvested, remained kneeling before us while the people departed. The two priests, assisted by the young man in attendance, replaced the vestments, candle-sticks and all that was used at the Mass, behind the altar, locking all up carefully, and leaving the garret an ordinary one in appearance, as before. Mr. Horne then re-

quested us to follow him to the house where he was staying and breakfast with the Bishop. . . . After breakfast we asked his blessing and took our leave ; and so ended that, to us, most important morning on which we had received five Sacraments of the Catholic Church. During the remainder of our stay in London we heard Mass every Sunday, either in the same garret, or at one of the Ambassadors' Chapels. Mass was rarely said on week-days for a congregation." <sup>1</sup>

Some such scene as this represents, no doubt, the surroundings in which Mass was said by Bishop Challoner on many a Sunday morning from 1741 to the time of his death, though in later life we know that he made special use of the Sardinian Ambassador's Chapel in Lincoln's Inn Fields. These embassies with their Catholic atmosphere, and their permanent open chapels, existing in the open light of day, with no need of concealment, must have afforded a welcome contrast to the furtive expeditions to garrets in back streets, with all their accompaniments of watchful precaution, and anxious secrecy ; but the priests and bishops of those days had to do their work as they found it, and were used to accommodating themselves to varying circumstances. But whether they gathered their people in embassy or in tavern they were anxious to avoid public notice. In London alone, where there were about 20,000 Catholics, Dr. Challoner found it necessary to hold twenty confirmations before all the candidates could finally be presented. By the end of May, however, he had finished, and he was then free to give his attention to the same work in the country.

But before we can record his journey in detail, in order to understand the task that lay before him, something must be said of the state of the country districts in general. For great as is the contrast between the state of London Catholics then and now, we become aware of a still wider difference between the state of the country missions in his day and our own. The very conditions of existence were entirely different from those at the present time, and these missions were carried on under circumstances which it is very difficult for a modern Catholic to realise.

At the present time, in every place of any size at all, we

<sup>1</sup> *A Hundred Years Ago*, by Mrs. Barnewall (Burns & Oates, no date), pp. 50 sqq.

expect to find a Catholic church, and presbytery, with the accompanying schools. Almost every town has its resident priest, and more or less permanent congregation, while here and there the private chapel of some Catholic country-seat, which is served by a chaplain, is open to the Catholics of the neighbourhood. In the eighteenth century, the position was not only reversed, but in the South of England it was a very rare and unusual thing to find a Catholic priest living in a country town at all. Even in cathedral cities and large county towns there was no provision for Catholics. No missions were to be found at Canterbury or Chichester, Aylesbury, Chelmsford or Lewes. Guildford, Colchester, Hertford, Bedford, Windsor were all in the London District, and most of them were of relatively greater importance then than now; yet we do not find a Catholic congregation in any one of them with the possible exception of Windsor. Doubtless, stray Catholics were to be found in these towns, but they had to discharge their spiritual duties elsewhere. Winchester, Reading and Havant were exceptions quite striking by reason of their rarity. The fact was that in most southern provincial towns Catholicism had practically died out. Yet in the ten counties which formed the London vicariate there were between 4,000 and 5,000 Catholics.<sup>1</sup> For almost all of these, the centres of Catholic life were found solely in the country-seats of the nobility and gentry. Where there was a Catholic estate there was a congregation, and usually a priest. When for any cause such a house passed into other hands, the mission ceased to exist, the priest disappeared, and the congregation melted away. Such missions depended for their existence absolutely on the patron. If he abandoned the faith or died without Catholic heirs, there was an end of everything. In this way it sometimes happened that the priests and people of an entire district depended on the fidelity of one family. Thus in Essex Lord Petre alone supported five missions, while Lord Teynham was described by Dr. Challoner as "the chief support of religion in Kent".<sup>2</sup> But though such a condition was the only possible one under the circumstances, and though the greatest

<sup>1</sup> Kent, Sussex, Hants, Berks, Surrey, Essex, Herts, Bucks, Bedford and Middlesex.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Challoner's Letter Book : letter to L. T—m, 16th July, 1742.



credit is due to the ancient families for the loyal service they thus rendered to the Church, the position was none the less a very precarious one. Joseph Berington, writing in 1780, points out that in his time many congregations had entirely disappeared. "In one district alone, with which I am acquainted, eight out of thirteen are come to nothing: nor have any new ones risen to make up, in any proportion, their loss." And among the causes which he regarded as accounting for the decrease, he enumerates in the first place the loss of families by death, or by their conforming to the Established Church. "When a family of distinction fails," he explains, "as there seldom continues any conveniency either for prayers or instruction, the neighbouring Catholics soon fall away: and when a priest is still maintained, the example of the Lord is wanting to encourage the lower class particularly to the practice of their religion. I recollect the names of at least ten noble families that within these sixty years have either conformed or are extinct; besides many Commoners of distinction and fortune."<sup>1</sup>

It must of course be borne in mind that a large proportion of such congregations consisted of the private household of the owner, or his immediate dependants, and when by extinction or apostasy the family ceased to exist or to be Catholic, the Catholic members of the household would naturally be dispersed and join other congregations. But in such cases there would inevitably be frequent loss of faith in the neighbourhood, if not at once, at least in the course of the next generation. It must also be remembered that many of these households were very large. Early in the eighteenth century Lord Aston's establishment at Standon Lordship contained more than 100 persons. In 1741 Lord Montague at Cowdray employed nearly 150. Catholic centres such as these would naturally attract other Catholics to settle in the neighbourhood, if only for the sake of the facilities afforded for the discharge of their religious duties, and thus widespread damage ensued whenever a mission came to an end.

Another difficulty created by this state of things was the anomalous position of the clergy, which was an immediate result of the dependence of the mission on the owner of the

<sup>1</sup> *State and Behaviour of English Catholics*, 2nd edition, 1781, p. 117.



estate. Though the laity occasionally applied to the vicars apostolic when they were in need of a chaplain, the latter did no more than recommend some priest who was thought suitable, and who happened to be available for the purpose. The actual appointment was made, not by the bishop, but by the patron, and the chaplain was regarded as entering the employment of the latter, much in the same way as if he were a secretary or a bailiff. In the household his position was a somewhat subservient one. Like those Anglican chaplains who were expected to confine themselves to one glass of wine, and to retire from their patron's table before the pudding was served, the Catholic priest was obliged to keep his place, and to put up with treatment that could never have been offered to a guest or member of the family. Bishop Milner recalls an instance of contemptuous treatment that deeply wounded him as a young priest; and occasionally trouble arose where the chaplain was a man of high spirit. In a well-known Yorkshire family there was a long struggle as to whether the chaplain was or was not entitled to the use of a silver chamber-candlestick, as the members of the family were. Ultimately the good father, unable to secure this recognition, resigned over the momentous question. Some trace of this dependence of chaplain on patron lasted almost till our own days, and a venerable canon, not long dead, used to relate how, as a young priest, he had to wait at the altar before beginning Mass till the noble patron was pleased to say, "Mr. —, you may begin".

The chaplain was in consequence also liable to be dismissed at his employer's pleasure, and might be removed from his sphere of work at any time without the bishop's knowledge or sanction. The only control, in fact, which the vicars apostolic could exercise over the arrangements made between the patron and the chaplain lay in the granting or withholding of spiritual faculties. By refusing such faculties, the bishop could, of course, render the chaplain useless to his employer, and thus create a situation difficult for both; but this was a course which only grave necessity could justify. Precisely the same conditions existed in the case of chaplains to the embassies, and only mutual accommodation between the ambassadors or other patrons and the vicars apostolic made such a system possible at all. Even so, there were occasional cases of friction, when

the laity asserted their rights over their chaplains with no uncertain voice. We may take just as one instance a letter written by Count Haslang, the Bavarian ambassador, in the course of a disagreement with Dr. Challoner in 1761. The bishop had declined to renew the faculties of one of the embassy chaplains. Upon this the ambassador wrote: "As long as a domestic does his duty and behaves well, he is entitled to protection, and if anything is intended against him, previous application ought to be made to ye Minister; but if otherwise is proceeded, it is a breach of privilege, as I look upon this, and the more so when the sentence is attempted to be carried into execution within my own walls, without my previous knowledge and consent. . . . I am not for screening anybody who is not worthy of the protection he enjoys, and I should have discharged him from my service if any substantial reason had been given against him."<sup>1</sup> The writer of this was one whom the bishop held in high esteem, and who had rendered many services to English Catholics. If his claim had been unusual, he was a sufficiently loyal Catholic to admit the fact, as soon as it was pointed out. But in the bishop's reply, though he remained firm, and would not give way, so far from considering the ambassador's attitude unreasonable, he disclaims all idea of "attempting anything upon your Excellency's privileges, for which I shall always have a most tender regard," and finally points out that "here is no attempt made against his continuing your Excellency's chaplain, and enjoying your protection". In other words, the bishop does not question the ambassador's right to appoint or dismiss his own chaplains; although he declines to allow faculties for hearing confessions to one who was judged unfit for that office, on the ground that this was purely a matter relating to "the care of the souls of the faithful committed to us".

It is obvious that one result of this system was to debar the bishop from the selection of the particular clergy attached to each of the embassy chapels in London, or to the great Catholic houses in the country, so that he was not able to dispose of his clergy as he thought most advantageous for the good of the whole district, but could at most expect to be consulted in arrangements made between the priests and laity, and

<sup>1</sup> Stonor's Roman Agency, p. 45, *Southwark Archives*.

make the best of them when concluded. Thus if he wished to move a priest from one mission to another, he could only do so by arranging the transfer with the patrons of the missions. Naturally, in practice, much deference in these matters was paid to the wishes of the vicars apostolic by clergy and laity alike, but there was always the chance, and sometimes the occurrence, of trouble.

Another consequence of the power of selecting their own chaplains, thus vested in the hands of Catholics of position, was that as many of them had family or other ties with different religious orders, they obtained their chaplains exclusively from one or other of the bodies of Regulars. Thus many missions were served by Jesuits, others by Benedictines, others again by Franciscan Recollects. In such cases the bishop had less control than ever, as it was for very many years strongly contended that he had no right either to give or withdraw faculties from such priests, and that all that he could reasonably expect was that they should intimate to him the faculties they had received from their own superiors. As will be seen in a later chapter, this point was ultimately decided against the Regulars, in favour of the bishops; but during the dispute the Regulars asserted that if the point were given against them, the laity would lose the right of having, as their chaplains, priests of whatever order they preferred—"in the ancient manner,"—and of dismissing them, if they so desired, without consulting the bishops. In their official reply laid before Propaganda, the bishops in meeting this point, far from denying that the liberty of the laity in that respect was of ancient right, contented themselves with arguing that this liberty would not be infringed by the decree under discussion; so natural did it seem to every one concerned that the appointment and dismissal of chaplains should remain exclusively in the hands of the lay patrons. Had these priests been in fact what they were in name—purely domestic chaplains—the arrangement would appear very reasonable; but when we remember that these chaplains acted in place of parochial clergy to all the Catholics of the districts round about,—so that all country priests with scarcely an exception were in this position,—it will be seen how strange a relationship was created between every vicar apostolic and the greater part of his clergy. Throughout his district many missions were in

the hands of Regulars, while in those which were served by seculars he had to acquiesce in arrangements over which he had no real control. At any moment a priest, responsible for the souls of a whole country-side, was liable to be removed at the will of a squire who might or might not be a good practising Catholic himself. It speaks well for the leading laymen of those times that such a power was used with so little abuse, and it may even seem suitable that in view of the sacrifices they made in their generous efforts for the maintenance of religion they should have enjoyed all possible privileges ; but it is none the less obvious how restricted was the power of the vicars apostolic under such circumstances.

It was under these conditions that Bishop Challoner had now to undertake a visitation of the whole South-East of England, a duty which owing to cross-country travelling, slow means of transit, and the number of places to be visited, became a work of several months' duration. At each halting-place he stopped a day, sometimes two or three. There were people to be confirmed—occasionally in large bodies,—inquiries to be made about the numbers and condition of the congregations, affairs to be arranged with chaplain and patron, acquaintances to be made and visits of ceremony to pay and receive. Old friends would be met, and new friends made, and doubtless much pleasure and consolation was to be derived from the intercourse with the various little communities scattered so far apart, and glad to welcome among them a bishop of the Church. But the work and the journey alike took time, so that the whole visitation, allowing for the winter months and necessary intervals for work in London, occupied the greater part of two years. Dr. Challoner mapped out the district as follows. He proposed to start immediately after Whitsuntide for Sussex and Hampshire, where Catholics were most numerous, taking the one or two Surrey missions as he went. This would occupy two months, and leave him a few weeks in London, before beginning an autumn tour through Berkshire, Buckingham and Bedfordshire. For the following year he reserved Kent and Essex. Middlesex and Hertford could be visited from London ; thus in two years, without being long away from London, he would visit all the missions in the ten counties.



His last London confirmation having taken place on the 31st of May, 1741, Bishop Challoner began his journey early in June. If any apology is needed for attempting what may seem the somewhat profitless task of tracing him from place to place through three counties for the space of two months, it may be found in the fact that, by doing so, we not only gain from one journey some idea of all his pastoral visitations in after years, but we are also enabled to form an estimate of the number and condition of the country missions in the South of England. So little has been recorded of their state during the eighteenth century, that to gather together in one place even a few of the scattered descriptions may be of service in forming a connected view of the Catholic life of that age. If any further excuse be needed, we may plead the fresh information that a careful examination of the bishop's note-books has made available for the first time. From these note-books we can trace this first episcopal visitation with some exactness, for he made methodical, though brief, notes of his journey. He sets down the barest details; the name of the place, the surname of the priest, the number of the congregation, the date of the confirmation and the number of those confirmed. Thus a typical entry runs: "Pennington and Avon. Frankland. crctr. 200. cfrmti. Jul. 5. 7. (18, 21)," which means that at the place in question Mr. Frankland was the priest; and that the bishop found about two hundred Catholics there, of whom he confirmed eighteen on the 5th of July and twenty-one on the 7th of the same month.

The first halting place seems to have been Cheam, in North-East Surrey, some fifteen miles from London Bridge, which he reached in the early days of June. There had been a mission here, apparently from the days of Charles I., and it is one of the places mentioned as served by Jesuits in the early part of the seventeenth century.<sup>1</sup> In later times we sometimes find seculars there, sometimes Dominicans, sometimes Benedictines. At the time of which we write, a little congregation of thirty Catholics were gathered together, under the care of a priest named Gray. The mission may have been helped by the Petre family who seem to have had some connection with Cheam; at least we know that in the following year the recently

<sup>1</sup> Payne, *Old English Catholic Missions*, xx., 88-97.



Chene Sur. Gray circr <sup>1741</sup> 30 *ifm*ti 9.  
 Peterfield. Hunt. Perkins. circr 60. *ifm*ti 31. Jun 10. Car. T. 10.  
 Traiford. Sug. Talbot circr 16. *ifm*ti 14. Jun 14.  
 Coudry <sup>1741</sup> 300 *ifm*ti 14. Jun 14. 114. & 2.  
 Burton whetenhall. circr 90 *ifm*ti Jun 17 45.  
 W. Ginsted Haughton. circr 150 *ifm*ti Jun 19. 41.  
 Anndel. Ber. circr 90 *ifm*ti Jun 21 & 22. 20 & 18.  
 n R. Hortham 0 *ifm*ti ne puen spia. 7. Anndel.  
 Slindon Norris circr 90. *ifm*ti 67.  
 Lodge Holt & Compton. Brooks 100 circr. *ifm*ti 30 Jun 28.  
 [Coic. Peterf. circr 30. Coudry 170. Burton 100 Ginsted  
 100. Anndel 10. Slindon 61. Traiford 10. Holt & 65.  
 W. Ginsted 26. Biggs 160. Coniers 66. Lane 20. Frankland  
 Tichburn 101. Shawell 30. Brambridge circr 109. Winton 120.  
 Wodmanwate, Dornar <sup>78</sup> *ifm*ti Jun 29. 44. [230  
 Langston. Havant & Biggs 260 *ifm*ti Jun 30, & July, 112.  
 Southend Coniers 100. *ifm*ti 40. Jul 2. Padwell Lane 30.  
*ifm*ti 11 Jul 3.  
 Dunnington & Avon. Frankland circr 200 *ifm*ti Jul 5, 7 (1824)  
 Sherwell martin 10 *ifm*ti Jul 9 circr 25.  
 Brambridge Lawson & 233. *ifm*ti Jul 10. 80 Jul 13. 2.  
 Tringford Belf. Needham. 32. *ifm*ti Jul 11. 14.  
 Winton Shaw & 300. *ifm*ti circr 100. Oct 24, 25, 26.  
 Tichburne Fetherstone. 150 *ifm*ti Jul 14, 10. 71.  
 Sutton place 58 *ifm*ti Jul 19 26. Anderson.

Kent July 1742. Lodge 80 *ifm*ti 25. Nash  
 Canterbury & circr 30. Calchill 39. *ifm*ti. 12.  
 Milgate. Chatham, whetenhall & 46. *ifm*ti. 15.  
 Farnborough & Jostford 13. Westbrook.  
 Scotney <sup>1742</sup> ~~1741~~ & circr 40. *ifm*ti 16. Battle  
 circr 24 *ifm*ti 8.

Weston Bucks supra 200. *ifm*ti Sept. 3 & 8 61.  
 Turvey Bedf. 35. *ifm*ti Sept 6. 25.  
 Chauson & Sheffield circr 20. Woborn.  
 Buckingham & Salton circr 80.  
 Brill & Ickford.  
 Bierton. 35. *ifm*ti Sept 10. 18.  
 Peterley & Brinkhurst circr 90 *ifm*ti Sept

12, 19



widowed Lady Petre took up her residence there, and was the chief support of the mission in succeeding years.<sup>1</sup>

Besides Cheam there seems to have been no other Catholic centre in Surrey, except Sutton Place, the seat of the Westons. But Dr. Challoner left this for his return journey, and pushed on to Sussex and Hampshire. With this object, he seems to have taken advantage of the great Portsmouth Road, with its stage coaches, to go straight to Petersfield, on the borders of both counties. There is no indication as to the way in which the bishop travelled. Many of his destinations were in places so remote that he could not have made much use of the stage-coach. We know that some of the vicars apostolic were accustomed to ride from place to place on horseback, and it is likely enough that Dr. Challoner himself did so, while the private coaches of the wealthier Catholics were no doubt often at his service. But however he travelled, we may well believe that he experienced enough of discomfort on his journeys, and even danger, to make them sufficiently serious undertakings. At the rate of six miles an hour, which was reckoned the average rate of a stage-coach, until Telford and Macadam reformed our roads in the first years of the nineteenth century, the forty miles and more between Cheam and Petersfield would seem a long day's journey.

At Petersfield there were sixty Catholics, of whom just half received confirmation at his hands. The priest's name was Perkins; but very little is known about this mission, which soon became extinct.

From there he went direct to one of the oldest and most famous Catholic houses in England, one of the very few places where the faith had never been extinguished, nor the Blessed Sacrament removed. This was Cowdray, the seat of the Viscounts Montague, a stately Tudor mansion, which, with its great banqueting-hall, chapel, galleries and gardens, was a

<sup>1</sup> Lady Mary Radcliffe, daughter of James, third Earl of Derwentwater, and widow of Robert, eighth Lord Petre. She died 31st Jan., 1760. Dr. Challoner's friend, Catherine Lady Stourton, was also interested in the mission at Cheam. Probably during the period which elapsed between the death of her first husband, Lord Petre, in 1713, and her marriage to Lord Stourton in 1733, she occasionally used the residence at Cheam, which would seem to have been a dower-house. The registers of Cheam mission from 1755 have been published by the Catholic Record Society. Vol. ii., *Miscellanea*, ii., 1906.

palace rather than a private dwelling. When the bishop approached its fine west front, with the great gate flanked by twin towers, he knew he was on Catholic ground, which during the whole time of persecution had been an unfailing refuge and shelter. Even in the reign of Elizabeth, it was so notable in this respect that it went by the name of "Little Rome". Anthony Browne, first Viscount Montague, who had built the house, was one of the leading men in Queen Mary's Court, and though he remained staunch in his belief, he continued to enjoy the favour of Elizabeth, who employed him on diplomatic missions, and found him so useful therein, that she was content to ignore his adherence to the old religion. She even honoured him by a visit to Cowdray in 1591, the year before his death. Nor did it, even after his time, cease to be a refuge for hunted priests. The mansion of a peer, which even in the worst times had enjoyed a certain immunity, always retained some degree of liberty, so that in such houses exterior signs of Catholicity, which would have been imprudent elsewhere, could safely be displayed, and the service of God could be carried out with considerable dignity, though still with closed doors. Thus at Cowdray the bishop would find the chapel, which stood on the east side of the quadrangle, beautifully fitted up, and instead of a few bare necessities hastily huddled away at the end of Mass, there were the permanent features of Catholic worship. We are told that at Cowdray the altar-piece was of peculiar beauty, while on the south side of the quadrangle was a long gallery "in which were painted the twelve Apostles as large as life". The house, beautiful now even in its ruins, was then a treasure-house of paintings, including frescoes by Holbein, sculptures and other objects of art, and the few days that the bishop spent here must have been like days from another existence. Here he would have no need for concealment, but would enjoy the fullest liberty in what was almost a Catholic neighbourhood ; for including Lord Montague's household, no fewer than three hundred persons used to assemble for Mass. Only five or six miles away, at Treyford, there was another resident priest, Mr. Talbot, with a handful of Catholics living there ; while five or six miles in the other direction lay Burton Park, the seat of the Goring family, which was to be the bishop's next destination.

It is curious that so Catholic a house as Cowdray should always have borne the reputation of being under a curse. This was the famous "Curse of Cowdray," which it was said was laid on the Montagues when, at the time of the suppression of the monasteries, Sir Anthony Browne, father of the first Lord Montague, expelled the nuns of Easebourne from their priory hard by. The story goes that the Cowdray family were doomed to perish by fire and water, and the legend received grim confirmation by the fate which befell the fine old house and its then owner, half a century after Bishop Challoner's visit, when, within the space of a month, the house was destroyed by fire, and its master was drowned. It was on the night of the 24th of September, 1793, that the house was reduced to the pile of ruins that is still to be seen in Cowdray Park, while before he had learned of this disaster, Lord Montague himself perished in a rash attempt to sail down the Laufenberg Cataracts on the Rhine.<sup>1</sup>

Before leaving, the bishop held a large confirmation on the 14th of June, there being 116 candidates, with a few more from Treyford.

From Cowdray the bishop had only to go five or six miles to the next place on his list. This was Burton, known too as Bodexton or Burton Castle, where there lived ninety Catholics served by a Jesuit father. It was formerly the seat of the old family of Gorings; but Sir William Goring, the last of the line, had died in 1724, and after his death his widow had retired to the convent at Liège where she had died a saintly death about five years before the time we are describing. She made her nephew, Francis Biddulph, her heir, bequeathing to him, among other things, her collection of silver church plate, probably part of the chapel furniture at Burton Park.

<sup>1</sup> Not Schaffhausen, as generally stated (see *Sussex Archaeological Collection*, vol. xx., p. 203). The title passed to Mark Anthony Browne, descended from a collateral branch of the family, and on his death in 1797 became extinct. The property passed to his sister, Mrs. Poyntz, who lived in apprehension of the curse being fulfilled in the case of her own son. The boy was, in fact, actually drowned before her eyes, a pleasure boat in which he was sailing being capsized while still in sight of the shore, where Mrs. Poyntz stood anxiously watching its progress. Her three daughters then became joint heiresses, and so the property was divided. A history of Cowdray, by Mrs. Roundell, was published in 1884, and the Cowdray Registers, 1745-1822, have been published by the Catholic Record Society. Vol. i., *Miscellanea*, i., 1905.



Leaving here after a few days, the bishop made his way to West Grinstead, a Catholic locality now of peculiar interest, because it is one of the few old missions which still exist. Cowdray has gone long since, but West Grinstead yet survives, with its record of unbroken worship and veneration of the Holy Eucharist. This was due to the devoted family of the Carylls, who were also connected with three other places, namely, Lady-Holt, Compton and Harting.<sup>1</sup> The Carylls had purchased it a century before from the previous owner, Lord Morley and Monteagle, also a Catholic. Thenceforth it was the chief seat of the family. Here lived John Caryll, the intimate friend and occasional host of Pope, who wrote many of his poems whilst staying at West Grinstead. Some of the doctored letters in the poet's distinctly artificial correspondence are addressed to him, and it is to him that we owe the "Rape of the Lock":—

This verse to Caryll, Muse, is due.

Besides the literary connection with the poet, he seems to have had some spiritual influence with him, and it was to him that Pope—never prone to open confession of his faith—wrote: "I assure you, notwithstanding, I will do or say nothing, however provoked, that is unbecoming the true character of a Catholic".<sup>2</sup> This avowal brightens a somewhat peevish letter, which complains of the general attitude of Catholics with regard to toleration, and which incidentally throws a side-light of some value on the intellectual temper of some of the priests, "who, I am afraid, being bred up to wrangle in the schools, cannot get rid of the humour all their lives". When Dr. Challoner stayed in the house of the Carylls, Pope was still living, but no longer visited West Grinstead, as his friend John Caryll had died five years before, in 1736, and had been succeeded by his grandson, John Baptist, the last and most unfortunate of the Carylls. This gentleman, usually known by his Jacobite title, Lord Caryll, who was now Dr. Challoner's host, became involved in financial difficulties; his lands were mortgaged, and a few years afterwards, in 1750, he sold the equity of redemption to

<sup>1</sup> For complete information about this family the monograph *West Grinstead et les Carylls*, by M. Max de Trenqualéon, Paris, 1898, may be consulted.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to the Hon. J. C., 18th June, 1711.

Mr. Merrick Burrell, a Protestant lawyer, in whose family the estate still is. But before parting with his property, Mr. Caryll made over to the Vicar Apostolic of London the ancient priest's house, which still exists, with the two hiding-places made in the time of persecution. Thus the Catholic congregation, which numbered 150, still had a place of worship, and when, later on, the old family mansion of the Carylls was pulled down by Sir William Burrell, he gave to the Catholic priest the Ionic pillars which flanked the doorway of the old chapel, that they might serve the same purpose in the new. John Baptist Caryll, after following the ebbing fortunes of Prince Charles Edward for some years, died in poverty at Dunkirk, but it is due to his generosity that the mission, which his ancestors had protected, was preserved even in the wreck of the family fortunes. It was usually served by Jesuits, and Bishop Challoner mentions Father Houghton as the priest there in 1741.<sup>1</sup>

When he left West Grinstead, Dr. Challoner proceeded in a south-westerly direction towards Arundel. With the splendours of Cowdray fresh in our recollection, it might be expected that at Arundel, the historic castle of the Dukes of Norfolk, the bishop would have found another Catholic palace. This, however, was not so. After the siege of Arundel Castle during the Civil War, it had been left almost a ruin, and having in consequence been abandoned as a residence, it remained dismantled for a century and a half. It is true that Thomas, eighth Duke of Norfolk, had partially repaired it in 1726, and occasionally lived there; but it was not till the very close of the eighteenth century that the thorough restoration and rebuilding of the castle began under the eleventh duke. The castle as it stands dates in great part from his time, and when Dr. Challoner stayed there, it consisted of only the remains of the mediæval castle, with the unsightly additions and restorations of 1720.<sup>2</sup> Edward, ninth Duke of Norfolk, who had succeeded his brother Thomas in 1732, proved a good friend and generous benefactor to the bishop for very

<sup>1</sup> Father Houghton remained there till his death in 1750. With him was an older priest, Father John Hodges (*alias* Massey), who was there from 1740 to 1750 (Foley, *Records Eng. Prov. S.ſ.*).

<sup>2</sup> Tierney's *History of the Castle and Town of Arundel*, vol. i. There are various views showing the building in this intermediate state, such as it was when the bishop knew it.

many years. During nearly half a century he held the title and was a worthy leader of the laity in every way. He was a man of considerable ability, whilst his duchess, Mary, daughter of Edward Blount, of Blagden, was a brilliant woman who filled her high station with distinction. The duke's loyalty to his faith debarred him from that place in the affairs of the nation to which his position entitled him, but he and his wife were welcomed at the Courts both of George II. and George III. The duchess was in fact a special friend of Queen Caroline, herself a clever woman, who could appreciate ability in others. When Frederick, Prince of Wales, and his wife, "cette diablesse Madame la Princesse," were turned out from St. James's Palace by the fiery George II. in the course of one of the interminable quarrels that distinguished the royal household, they took refuge at Norfolk House, where the Princess gave birth to her eldest son, afterwards George III. It was a difficult position for the duke and duchess, but they met it with such tact that they satisfied both the king and queen on the one side, and the prince and princess on the other. "It was signified to them," writes Charles Butler, "that their frequent attendance at court was expected." The same writer, after noting the friendship of the duchess for William Murray, afterwards Lord Mansfield, Lord Chief Justice of England,<sup>1</sup> says of her: "She loved business. Her talents for it and her high rank made her the refuge of the Catholics in all their vexations; and she availed herself of her intimacy with Lord Mansfield to render them every service in her power."<sup>2</sup>

Both the duke and duchess contributed much to bring about the kinder feeling towards Catholics which made the Relief Act of 1778 possible, but neither lived to see it, for the duchess died in 1773 and the duke followed her four years later, in the ninety-second year of his age. Although it seems fitting to give this brief account of him and his wife in connection with Arundel, in fact they were not much in residence there. The duke preferred Worksop Manor in Nottinghamshire as a

<sup>1</sup> "Than whom there never has been a judge more venerated by his contemporaries, nor whose memory is regarded with greater respect and affection even at this distance of time as the great oracle of law, and the founder of commercial jurisprudence" (Foss, *Biographical Dictionary of the Judges of England*, p. 469).

<sup>2</sup> Butler's *Memoirs of English Catholics*, 1st ed., vol. ii., p. 71.



EDWARD, NINTH DUKE OF NORFOLK.





country-seat, and showed his love for architecture and interest in building there rather than at Arundel. The present Norfolk House in St. James's Square was also built by him. Under the circumstances it is not surprising to find a comparatively small number of Catholics at Arundel, only ninety in all.

A few miles from Arundel lay another Catholic house of great interest—Slindon, the seat of the Kemps, and subsequently, by intermarriage, of the Earls of Newburgh. In Catholic days it had been a summer residence of the Archbishops of Canterbury, having been originally granted by Henry I. to St. Anselm. It was here that Cardinal Stephen Langton died, and the manor was rich in memories of saints. St. Thomas, and after him St. Edmund, had held it, and there is a tradition that the latter with his chancellor, St. Richard, frequently stayed there. When Dr. Challoner visited it, it was in the possession of Anthony Kemp, the last male representative of his family, who held it till his death in 1753, when the estate passed to his daughter Barbara, Countess of Newburgh. There were ninety Catholics there under the charge of a priest called Harris, who was probably the Jesuit of that name. Beyond Slindon, still travelling back towards Hampshire, was Lady-Holt, the ancient home of the Carylls, where they lived before they bought West Grinstead. With Lady-Holt was reckoned Compton, and between them they mustered more Catholics than either Arundel or Slindon.

Finally, to finish this corner of Sussex, the bishop visited Woodmancote, where he kept the feast of SS. Peter and Paul. Here there were seventy-eight Catholics, of whom he confirmed forty-two. Dr. Challoner had now spent nearly three weeks in this neighbourhood, where within a radius of fifteen miles he had found seven great Catholic houses, not counting smaller centres, with a population amounting altogether to nearly a thousand. This state of things, however, was exceptional, and very few country districts were like it. The one county in the South in which Catholics were more numerous than Sussex, was Hampshire, which at this time contained about fifteen hundred of them, and to Hampshire the bishop now proceeded.

It will not be necessary to follow him with the same amount of detail through all the stages of his journey, especially as the general character of the houses which he visited will now be

understood. The main outline is the same. There is in each case the family of noble or gentle birth with long histories extending back into persecution days, the resident priest with his congregation, more or less numerous, largely of family dependants, reinforced by a few neighbouring farmers and their households.

There were five chief centres of Catholicity in the county: Havant, Pennington and Avon, Brambridge, Winchester and Tichborne, besides several smaller missions. Dr. Challoner reached Havant in July, and from there worked his way up towards Winchester in a north-westerly direction.

On his way from Havant to Pennington and Avon, Bishop Challoner visited the two small Jesuit missions of Soberton, or Southend, and Padwell. At the former, the congregation met at a small farm-house, named "Kirby's," where the priest lived, and which had been left for that purpose to the fathers of the society by a lady, Mrs. Jane Bright, Lord Arundel of Wardour acting as trustee. The mission was kept up until 1839, and Brother Foley, S.J., recounts how he heard Mass there in his childhood and met among the congregation the descendants of Catholics who had fought for the Stuarts in 1745.<sup>1</sup>

At Padwell Dr. Challoner met Father William Lane, S.J., the aged priest who was for many years the rector of the Jesuit district known officially as "the College of St. Thomas of Canterbury," and which embraced the counties of Sussex, Hants, Wilts and Dorset. At Padwell Father Lane had only thirty Catholics, and the bishop did not have occasion to give confirmation there.

Skirting the south of the New Forest, he next made his way to Pennington and Avon. Sir Thomas Webbe was the patron, but little information seems to be forthcoming about this mission, except the facts which the bishop himself records, and they are bare figures — thirty-nine confirmed out of a congregation which numbered about two hundred. On leaving this place he made his way up to Brambridge in the neighbourhood of Winchester.

Brambridge was of considerable size, as missions then went,

<sup>1</sup> The number of Catholics gradually decreased, so that in 1839 the mission was closed, the estate sold and the proceeds devoted to the Church at Tunbridge Wells (Foley, *Records*, xii., 817).

having a congregation of 230. It was the seat of the Wells family, who could claim the honour of having given a martyr to the Church. It was in Elizabeth's reign that Ven. Swithin Wells, the sixth son of Thomas Wells of Brambridge, had suffered in Gray's Inn Lane, and now in the time of George II. the family was still in possession of its old home, though a few years later the estates passed into other hands. At the time of which we speak, two members of the family, Charles and Gilbert Wells, were Jesuits, and the mission was generally served by fathers of the Society. Fifteen or sixteen years later, the house came into the possession of Walter Smythe of the family of Smythe of Acton Burnell, the father of the celebrated Mrs. Fitzherbert, afterwards wife of George IV.

At Brambridge the bishop remained four days, on the second day of his stay visiting Twyford, a place unique in the fact that it possessed the only Catholic school in the whole of his district, or, for the matter of that, in the South of England. The old house in which this school maintained a secret existence still remains, though it is now divided into tenements. It stands some distance off the main road into Winchester, from which it is about three miles distant. The school had been founded at Silkstead in the reign of James II., and being situated in an obscure village remote from London, it escaped the destruction which the Revolution brought on the two schools that had been founded in the capital. Here Alexander Pope had spent his earliest school-days, under the headmastership of the Rev. Edward Taverner, *alias* Banister. The school was patronised well, and several boys of the best families were brought up there. At the time of Bishop Challoner, however, there were only thirty-two Catholics in all, so that the number of boys could not have been large. It is said that the school never recovered the loss of the Rev. Walter Fleetwood, who left in 1732 and subsequently entered the Society of Jesus. He was succeeded by the Rev. Joseph Gildon, who died four years later, and was replaced by the Rev. John Philip Betts, who was the headmaster when Dr. Challoner came there. He became well known to the bishop in later years, for when the school came to an end, in the general panic which seized Catholics after the failure of the Stuart rising in 1745, he returned to London, where for very many

years he lived in Gray's Inn, taking charge of the Clergy Library there.

A much more remarkable man than Mr. Betts was his assistant, John Turberville Needham, then a young priest of twenty-eight, who afterwards became famous as a physiologist. In times when it was difficult for any Catholic, much less any priest, to obtain recognition, his abilities caused his election as a Fellow of the Royal Society, besides obtaining for him the membership of many learned societies on the Continent. For some years he was rector of the Imperial Academy at Brussels, where he died in 1781.<sup>1</sup>

If Bishop Challoner had paid his visit to the school three years earlier, he would have found among the school-boys a twelve-year-old lad who was afterwards to become his coadjutor bishop. This was the Hon. James Talbot, son of the Earl of Shrewsbury; but he had left Twyford in 1738, and was now a student at Douay.

After leaving Brambridge, Dr. Challoner would naturally have gone on to Winchester, where there was a large mission of 300 Catholics. But for some reason he left Winchester till the autumn, and turned off to the right to Tichborne House, the seat of the Tichbornes, who had been people of position in Hampshire even before the Norman Conquest. By promptly proclaiming James I. king at Winchester, without waiting for orders from the Administration, the first Baronet, Sir Benjamin Tichborne, had gained the favour of that monarch, and had been granted Winchester Castle in fee-farm. His successor, Sir Richard, defended the castle for the king through the Civil Wars, and the family suffered much during the Commonwealth. With the Restoration, however, their troubles came to an end, and Sir Henry Tichborne was appointed Lieutenant of the New Forest. He was succeeded in 1689 by his son Sir Henry Joseph Tichborne, the fourth baronet, who lived to hold the estates for more than half a century, and who was now Bishop Challoner's host at Tichborne House. He was in extreme old age, and had outlived his three sons, so that his heir was his brother, Father John Hermingild Tichborne, a Jesuit, who in fact succeeded him as fifth baronet on his death in 1743.

<sup>1</sup> *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*, vol. xl.

Tichborne had one personal association for the bishop, for it was here that his mother had died a few years previously, though he had not been able to assist her at her deathbed, and this seems to have been his first visit since her death. On this occasion he stayed there two days, holding a large confirmation of seventy people—there were 150 in the congregation—and this ended his work in Hampshire.

From Tichborne he went straight back to London, stopping only at Sutton Place, in Surrey, a beautiful mansion belonging to the Weston family, which had been a noted refuge for Catholics since the very beginning of the persecution. Speaking of this house, Brother Foley, S.J., writes: "Hiding holes have frequently come to light which were probably made by 'Little John,' that useful cunning joiner of those times. Indeed, they were greatly needed, as Sutton Place was often searched most savagely, and must have given much trouble, for it was surrounded by woods, and covered such an extent of ground that the exits from it must have been as numerous as bolt-holes in a rabbit-warren."<sup>1</sup> Since the days of Bishop Challoner, Sutton Place has passed from the Westons to the Salvins, but it is no longer in Catholic occupation, though still owned by Catholics.

On the 19th of July the bishop returned to London, where he resumed for some weeks, at least, his minutely regular life. During his tour of seven weeks he had visited twenty congregations, and confirmed over 800 persons. But it is impossible to study the dry statistics in their original form—which would be out of place in these pages—without the conviction that his task must have been a disheartening one, bringing him face to face with the hard fact that the Catholic congregations, small as they were, were steadily shrinking, and that the Faith could not without difficulty keep possession of the few and scattered strongholds which yet remained.

<sup>1</sup> *Records*, i., 297-98.



## CHAPTER X.

### THE MEMOIRS OF MISSIONARY PRIESTS.

1741-1742.

THE return to the customary life in London for the summer of 1741, brought with it the quiet resumption of the literary work which the bishop always had in hand. This, the first year of his episcopate, marked the completion of long labour. He was now able to publish the first volume of his best-known work, the *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*, the book which, together with the *Meditations* and the *Garden of the Soul*, has made his name for so long a household word. His object was to give, for the first time, a complete account of the English martyrs from the reign of Elizabeth to that of Charles II. He does not aim at any general history of the persecution, a work, which, in fact, yet remains to be written. He does not even give a systematic or connected view of the various enactments of the penal code. His simpler purpose was to give a series of detached biographies of over 400 Catholics who had died for religion. His work, reprinted again and again, took firm hold of the imagination of English Catholics. It kept alive among them the memory of the martyrs, and fostered that devotion to them that has increased in such marked degree during our own times, and which has been rewarded by the Beatification of more than sixty of their number and the introduction of the Cause of 350 more.

Until he wrote, there was no record in English of their lives. Their sufferings had been described in Latin, in Italian, Spanish and French; but the English reader could only find scattered references in old controversial works and stray biographies of single martyrs, such as the *Life and Death of Edmund Genings*. Moreover, even the Latin accounts were only

to be found in rare and ancient works or among inaccessible archives, while the information varied considerably alike in value and in volume. Dr. Challoner's task was to collect, examine, and arrange, to translate and abridge, and finally to present in suitable form materials which were lying in books or manuscripts in the haphazard form of the original records. The result of his labour was a book which won instant success in its own day by its intrinsic interest, which long held its ground as the chief source of information on the subject; and which can never be entirely forgotten, because its critical value is permanent. It has been, and will be, supplemented without ever being superseded. The study of the English martyrs is being carried on at the present time with more vigour than ever. The continual publication of records, both public and private, the increased facilities for access to State Papers, and the modern interest in original sources of information, all combine to give new life to the investigation of their history and to throw new light on their lives. But however the research be extended it is hardly too much to say that Challoner's *Memoirs of Missionary Priests* has taken its place among these original sources. At the very least it represents the earliest labours in that direction.

The nature of his work we cannot fairly appreciate without bearing in mind both the extent of ground he had to cover and the means at his disposal. This will involve a brief general view of the course of the martyrdoms, apart from the other features of the persecution, and what is more closely connected with Challoner himself, a short survey of the sources from which he drew his information.

Merely to read down his chronological list of martyrs, at once brings home to the mind the intermittent and spasmodic nature of the persecution, so far as it took the form of capital punishment. We must distinguish between this occasional blood-shedding and the unrelenting permanent burden of persecution in domestic and civil affairs, which weighed on the daily life of Catholics without respite for more than 200 years; that constant and severe repression which was doubtless felt more hardly in some places and at some times than at others, but which, save for the breathing space afforded by James II., was never altogether relaxed from the time of

Elizabeth to that of George III. During all this period the penal code in varying degrees of intensity lay like darkness on the persecuted Church, a darkness, too, that was only at intervals illumined by the glory of martyrdom. Even in the reign of Elizabeth, whose later years, without exception, all contribute names to the roll, there was no indiscriminate deluge of blood, but her executions were often timed with nice regard to political exigencies. So it happened that the martyrs came as the stars do, first one, then another; then they appear in twos and threes, until they shine forth in multitude.

For the first eleven years of the reign no execution took place at all, and as the author has restricted his subject to missionary priests, he was not concerned with the five or six martyrs who suffered during the first few years after the Bull of Excommunication in 1570. It is true that subsequently he included several victims from the laity, but his intention was to begin his work with the first martyred seminary priest. It is not until 1577 that Blessed Cuthbert Mayne, proto-martyr of Douay College, heads the procession, followed a year later by John Nelson and Thomas Sherwood. Then comes a pause, but in 1581 we have the glorious company of Campion, Sherwin, Briant and Hanse, and from that time the ranks of the martyrs grow full. The year of the Spanish Armada, 1588, shows the longest list; and for some years before and for many years after the numbers would rise and fall, but never wholly cease. In the period ending with Elizabeth's own unhappy death, Dr. Challoner records 187 names besides those of many who, dying in prison, escaped the scaffold. The twenty-two years from 1581 to 1603 proved the fiercest period of the persecution.

After the accession of James, though each year still shows its list of names, the numbers are much lower, never, in fact, exceeding four in a single year. With Cecil's death in 1612 the executions cease altogether for four years, though there were further outbursts of persecution both in 1616 and 1618. These, however, proved to be the last for a long time. The isolated execution of the Ven. Edmund Arrowsmith and his companion at Lancaster in 1628 stands alone in a period of more than twenty years—from 1618 to 1641. With that exception no blood was shed, through the troubled reign of Charles I., until 1641, that confused year which witnessed the King's

sacrifice of his own friend and servant, Strafford. But the Parliament, angry at the king's clemency with regard to Catholic priests, took the opportunity afforded by his reprieving the Ven. John Goodman, to force him to give way to them in this matter. Though this particular priest was allowed to linger in prison till his death, two others suffered, one in London and one in Lancashire; and these two introduce another long line of martyrs which stretches through the succeeding years till 1647. During the Commonwealth two priests only won the crown, Peter Wright in 1651, and John Southworth in 1654, and then a quarter of a century passed, wherein there grew up a generation to which martyrdom was only a matter of tradition. It seems in fact likely that, had it not been for Titus Oates, this would have been the end, but his work was to add another chapter to the story, and the three years 1679, 1680 and 1681 gave more than twenty fresh names to that long roll.

Even from this bare enumeration it will be seen that the English martyrs fall roughly into three groups. The Elizabethan and Jacobean martyrs who belong to the heat of the persecution, and who represent the State effort to crush out the Catholic Faith among the English people; the martyrs of the Parliament, who were victims of Puritan hatred for Popery, and the martyrs of Charles II., who were sacrificed to national panic, consequent on a sham political plot.

The material for the history of the last class is so abundant as to become embarrassing. The Titus Oates plot, with its ramifications and developments, has a literature of its own. Dr. Challoner's task here was one of selection and compression. The martyrs of the Parliamentary period were also sufficiently recent in date to be comparatively easy to trace. The difficulty was to relate the story of many of the Elizabethan martyrs.

There was first of all the question as to who were to be included in the list. This was largely surmounted by the fact that Catholics had always shown themselves anxious to preserve the memoirs of those who had died for the faith, and from the early days of the persecution catalogues of the sufferers had been made. These catalogues were independent of the attempts, often earlier in date, to collect biographical details. The earliest of the catalogues may be ascribed to 1608, in which year two independent lists were published, but before this time

there were several collections of biographical accounts which call for notice. Passing by all mention of martyrs made by way of reference only, in contemporary literature—though such references are numerous and illuminating—we may give Cardinal Allen the credit of being the first to write a book exclusively devoted to the martyrs.<sup>1</sup> This was the *Briefve Historie of Twelve Reverend Priests*, published at Rheims in 1582,<sup>2</sup> which formed the nucleus round which subsequent books were formed. Thus it was translated into Latin and with many additions was included in Bridgewater's rare book, *Concertatio Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ*, published first in 1582, which in its turn was translated into Spanish by Fray Diego Yepes, with further additions in 1600. These three books, Allen, Bridgewater, Yepes, represent the main stream of history relating to the martyrs. In fact, they form the gradual development of one work, rather than three separate books, and there were many other works depending more or less on them. These sometimes passed through further editions, which kept pace with the progress of the persecution. Thus a history of "The Glorious Martyrdom of sixteen Priests,"<sup>3</sup> published in Italy in 1583, becomes in 1585 the history of the glorious martyrdom of *eighteen priests and one layman*.<sup>4</sup>

It will be noted that only the first of these three original sources is in English; and this was so sedulously suppressed by the Government that it is of the utmost rarity. All other works, whether in Latin, Spanish or Italian, were intended for the use of Continental Catholics, and but few copies found their way into England.

The two catalogues of 1608 were, then, among the earliest attempts to preserve, among Catholics in England, the names

<sup>1</sup> The same year saw the *True Reporte of the Death and Martyrdome of M. Campion . . . and M. Sherwin and M. Bryan* (see Gillow, *Bibl. Dict. Eng. Cath.*, i., 294).

<sup>2</sup> Reprinted by the Rev. J. H. Pollen, S.J. (London, Burns & Oates), 1908. See also his Introduction to this and to the *Lives of the English Martyrs*, vol. ii., and his notes on the lists of martyrs in his volume, *Unpublished Documents Relating to the English Martyrs, 1584-1603*, published by the Catholic Record Society, 1908.

<sup>3</sup> *Historia del glorioso martirio di sedici sacerdoti*, Macerata, 1583.

<sup>4</sup> *Historia del glorioso martirio di diciotto sacerdoti ed un secolare*, Macerata, 1585. The additional two priests and the layman were, in fact, included in the earlier edition, though only in an appendix.



of their martyrs, with the dates and places of suffering. The first was published by a priest named John Wilson as an appendix to his book, *The English Martyrologe*, which was a summary of the lives of British saints. He called his appendix *A Catalogue of those who have suffered death in England for defence of the Catholic Cause synce the year of Christ 1535 and 27 of King Henry VIII. his raigne unto this yeare 1608.*

In this same year a similar list by an anonymous author also appeared, but is so rare that the copy discovered by the present writer in 1897 among the Harvington pamphlets at Oscott is the only one known to exist.<sup>1</sup> This pamphlet has no title-page, but is headed, *A Catalogue of Martyrs in Englande for profession of the Catholique Faith since the yeare of our Lord 1535, being the 27 of King Henrie the VIII. unto this yeare 1608, the 6 of King James.* Father Pollen and Mr. Gillow agree in attributing this to Dr. Worthington, the president of the English College at Douay.

These two lists are of the greater value because, though contemporary, they are clearly independent of each other, and represent separate traditions. Their mutual testimony is therefore of the highest value. The discrepancies between them as to dates and sometimes places, as well as in orthography, are so marked as to make their agreement as to names the more striking. Thus they are in agreement as to the names of 260 martyrs, while there are only twelve peculiar to Wilson and fourteen peculiar to Worthington. It will be seen, therefore, that careful count of the martyrdoms was being kept, and the ecclesiastical authorities showed that they, too, were alive to the importance of the record. Dr. Worthington published a second list in 1614, which was a catalogue of martyrs from 1570 to 1612, with an account of the origin of the seminaries abroad. Later on the Vicar Apostolic of England, Dr. Richard Smith, Bishop of Chalcedon, drew up another which has never been published.

These various lists, therefore, served their purpose in re-

<sup>1</sup> It was published in the *Downside Review*, 1897, being edited by Mr. Joseph Gillow, though unfortunately two names—Ven. Thomas Belchiam and Ven. Richard Martin—were omitted, and one or two minor inaccuracies escaped correction. See Father Pollen's Introduction to his *Unpublished Documents Relating to the English Martyrs* (1908), Catholic Record Society, vol. v.

cording the names of those who suffered ; but much care was also shown in obtaining particulars of their lives and deaths. Naturally the colleges abroad became the chief store-houses of the manuscript relations that were compiled in nearly all cases. Douay, Rome, Valladolid, St Omer's, all treasured up in their archives every trace of information that could be gathered in England and safely carried abroad. Sometimes a complete life was written, and in rare instances published ; in other cases those concerned were induced to write out their reminiscences of a whole period, and such accounts frequently have reference to several martyrs. As an instance of the former class we might allege the early *Life of Blessed John Nelson*,<sup>1</sup> one of the first martyrs to die ; or the *Life of Ven. Margaret Clitheroe*, written by her confessor. Representative of the second class is Father Warford's "*Relation of Martyrs*," preserved at Stonyhurst. In this he gives his own recollections of many of the martyrs, as well as information gathered at first hand from their friends. His accounts of the personal appearance of many of the earlier martyrs have special interest.

Such manuscripts, both single lives and general recollections, were very numerous. Much must have perished at the wholesale destruction of English religious houses during the French Revolution, but much has fortunately been preserved. In recent years many manuscripts have been published in full, and it is confidently to be expected that before many years all these sources of information will have been made accessible in print.

But when Dr. Challoner undertook his task, he had to act as a pioneer among all this manuscript information. With the printed lists to guide him as to names and the printed biographies of the earlier martyrs to serve as a nucleus, he had the groundwork of his book to hand, but his chief difficulty was the inaccessibility of the documents. Had he been living at Douay with daily opportunity of consulting archives, he might with the help of friends in the other colleges abroad have performed the work with comparative ease, but, living in London, he had to rely upon transcripts of all the innumerable papers he needed.

Fortunately for him, Alban Butler was at this time a professor at Douay, and he seems to have taken endless pains to

<sup>1</sup> The very old MS. copy of this, used by Bishop Challoner, is still at Oscott.





supply the copies required. It is quite possible that when Dr. Challoner visited Douay in 1737 he may have looked through the papers with the view to selecting those which he would need. But if this was not then done, he owed to Alban Butler the selection as well as the transcription of the matter. The transcripts thus made in Butler's bold, close writing, with occasional notes in Challoner's own neat, small hand, are still preserved at Oscott. With the Douay transcripts are some other manuscripts of various ages which he probably collected elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

A careful study of this collection has yet to be made. Many papers in it are only copies of documents still existing elsewhere, but Challoner did not use all his material for the book, and it is very probable that some of the papers are unique and represent originals, which are now lost. It is impossible to turn over these closely written sheets without realising the care taken to collect the best evidence available and to utilise all information then existing.

With this collection before us we realise that, though the book, was written in London, the author had the advantage of all the information that Douay could give. Nor was the English College alone laid under contribution: some papers were copied from the Benedictine archives. Thus in one place the transcriber notes, "These seem two letters of memoirs sent to St. Gregory's here by two witnesses of great part". Another is headed, "Nomina Martyrum e Fam[ilia] Ben[edictina] in Anglia, from a MSS. from the Ben[edictines] here". Three or four others seem on internal evidence to have come from the house of Franciscan Recollects—St. Bonaventure's, Douay. On one of these—the account of Ven. John Wall's trial—is the note, "This is writ in the Martyr's own hand in 26 pages".

Then we have a manuscript which Challoner himself says was sent to him from St. Omer. This is the *Vitæ per P. Stanæum scriptæ trium laicorum*, and there are other papers from the same college. In his preface to the second volume he

<sup>1</sup> This valuable collection ultimately came into the possession of Charles Butler, who gave it to Dr. Kirk of Lichfield, by whom it was left to Oscott College. It contains ninety-six pieces in all, seventy-six of which were bound together by Dr. Kirk, while the remainder are loose. Some half-dozen have no connection with the martyrs, but have been included with the rest through being in Alban Butler's writing.



makes acknowledgment to all these sources, "particularly to the English Colleges of Douay and St. Omer, and to the English Benedictines and Franciscans; and amongst the Catholic gentry to C——t C——le Esq., who furnished us with diverse useful books and manuscripts".

This gentleman was Cuthbert Constable, M.D., of Burton Constable, Yorkshire, a wealthy and cultured Catholic, who occupied his leisure in collecting a large and valuable library. He had been educated at Douay, and as he entered in 1700 it is possible that he and the bishop had been school-fellows. His chaplain, the Rev. John Knaresborough, had made a large collection in several volumes entitled *Sufferings of Catholics*, and covering the period from 1573 to 1654,<sup>1</sup> and of these papers Challoner states that he has made large use.

It does not appear that he had access to any of the Roman or Spanish papers, though he would certainly have known of the collections at the English colleges, both in Rome and Valladolid. Probably he felt that the sources already at his disposal were sufficient, if not exhaustive; and that he had enough for his purposes.

"As we had so many to treat of," he writes in his preface to the first volume, "we have been sometimes forced to be shorter than could have been wished, and to pass many things over, that we might be able to bring the whole into compass; which has chiefly happened with relation to those whose lives have been published at large, and might singly suffice for a just volume: as those of Father Campion, Father Walpole, etc. For as for some others, we have been obliged to be much shorter than we would, for want of proper lights; having been able to find little else of them than that they died at such a time and place, and for the Cause of their Religion. We cannot but lament our being left so much in the dark, with regard to several, but shall not pretend to determine whether this has happened by the Iniquity of the Times, or the Negligence of our Forefathers, in not committing to writing the Particulars of those Gentlemen's Lives and Deaths; or, perhaps the Memoirs then written, have since been lost; as we know

<sup>1</sup> Five volumes of this work are now in the library at Everingham, having been purchased by the late Lord Herries at the Burton Constable sale in 1889. The remainder are lost. See Gillow, *Bibl. Dict.*, i., 550, and iv., 61.

some have, at least so far as not to have come as yet to our hands. Wherefore we think it proper to advertise our Reader, that if he knows of any such Memoirs, and will be so good as to furnish us with them, or with any other Materials, relating to the Sufferings of Catholics, we shall thankfully acknowledge the favour, and insert them by way of a Supplement in our Second Volume, which we are preparing for the Press."

Having now seen the manner in which he collected his material, we pass to the use he made of it. His purpose was clear. He proposed to perpetuate the memory of the martyrs by describing the facts of their lives and deaths. He has, therefore, given us a record almost in the manner of an ancient chronicler, who is content to set down, without comment, deeds which speak for themselves. There is no attempt at a historical survey; but little in the way of explanation; nothing in the nature of general comment. "We pretend not to make Panegyrics of any of these brave men; but merely to deliver short memoirs of what we found most remarkable in their lives and particularly in their deaths."<sup>1</sup>

He therefore confines himself to the most sober narration, and, so far from attempting anything like vivid presentment, leaves the story to tell itself. It is interesting on comparison of his own narrative with the original sources to notice that often it is just those small graphic touches in the older descriptions, which a modern writer would most readily seize on as lending vividness to the description, which he marks for omission; probably because he felt that they were trivial and, in his view, irrelevant to the main purpose.

Thus although a great part of the first volume in particular is direct quotation, it is always quotation that has been edited in this sense. Nothing material is left out, but expressions are sometimes changed or softened, and the narrative is condensed by the omission of clauses or even sentences. At the head of each section—and each martyr or group of martyrs has, as a rule, a separate section,—he states his authorities. In his account he is faithful to the principle laid down in the preface, and, having given a brief account of the early career of the martyr in question, passes as rapidly as possible to the accounts of the imprisonment, trial and death.

<sup>1</sup> Preface, vol. i.

With regard to the general contents of the book, he was met at the outset with the crucial question of whether in any given case the martyr might not have suffered rather on political than on religious grounds. This distinction is much more difficult to draw, in the case of many of Henry VIII.'s victims, than it is with regard to those who died under Elizabeth. Still, even with regard to these the question had to be faced, in some degree. From the first, Cecil and his Government had contended that, as they were convicted of high treason, they were purely political offenders. This view was vigorously combated by Cardinal Allen in his *Sincere and Modest Defence of the Suffering Catholics*. But in spite of this refutation Cecil's view has from time to time been repeated, and even in our own day has been occasionally advanced. Dr. Challoner asserts his principle clearly.

"As to the odious imputation of Treason, which was laid at these gentlemen's door; though we pretend not to act the Apologist, but only the Historian; yet we must acquaint our reader that we have inserted no one's name in our list, without being first fully convinced that his religion and conscience was his only Treason; which was certainly the case of all who suffered upon the Penal Statutes of Elizabeth, 27, viz: either for being made priests by Roman Authority, and exercising their functions in England, or for harbouring, and relieving such priests: and it no less certainly was the case of those who suffered for denying the Spiritual Supremacy, or for being reconciled to the Catholic Church: a thing the more evident, because there was not a man of them all, but might have saved his life, if he would but have conformed in matters of religion."<sup>1</sup>

On these grounds he excludes the name of James Leyburn, who was put to death in 1583, and who had been acknowledged by Wilson, and by Worthington alike. In this case Dr. Challoner expressly states that he omits this gentleman's name because "both at his arraignment and at his death he denied the Queen to be his lawful sovereign".<sup>2</sup> On the other hand he admits Mary Queen of Scots, whose case has never been regarded among Catholics as settled, and who has

<sup>1</sup> Preface, vol. i.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

not been included in the decree introducing the cause of beatification of the martyrs.

It will be noticed that by the terms of his title-page, Dr. Challoner confines himself to missionary priests and lay Catholics from 1577 to 1684, and therefore passes over all the earlier martyrs of Elizabeth's reign, such as BB. Thomas Percy, Thomas Plumptree, John Story, John Felton and Thomas Woodhouse. As he elected to begin with the proto-martyr of the Seminary Priests, Blessed Cuthbert Mayne, it seems possible that he may originally have planned his book as an account of the missionaries only, and was afterwards led to extend his scheme by including lay Catholics.

If any testimony were needed to the care with which the bishop compiled his two volumes, it would be found in the fact that with all the additional information afforded by the State Papers and other archives, which were inaccessible to him, the actual errors that have been discovered in his accounts are very few. It is true that his book is no longer read as it once was, and can no longer be regarded as the ultimate authority on the subject, but it has fallen into neglect, not through any inherent defect, but partly because its literary form is antiquated, and partly because of the new information available, still more perhaps because the labours of Challoner have been appropriated by all succeeding writers, and now form a common possession.

From its first publication, it took its place among standard Catholic works, and the use made of it for spiritual reading in Catholic houses was such as to win for it just that form of success which Dr. Challoner most desired. The first volume appeared in 1741, and the second in the following year, but as this edition sufficed for the Catholic book-buying public for half a century, we may imagine that the sale was neither rapid nor large. During the nineteenth century, however, when the Catholic body, instead of diminishing, was growing larger year by year, it was reprinted several times. There was a two-volume edition issued by the Manchester publisher, Thomas Haydock, in 1803; a London re-issue in 1824, which was so much in demand that a reprint was called for two years later, although in the meantime two tiny volumes had appeared in the Derby Reprints Series, and these, being very cheap, had a

large popular sale. Besides these editions it was brought out in parts embellished with execrable woodcuts of the penny-dreadful order in 1825, and re-published, in the same form, with other matter under the title *A Complete Modern British Martyrology*. There was also an American edition brought out in Philadelphia in 1839.

Finally, passing over an inferior Dublin reprint (1874), it was published in handsome modern form in 1878 by T. C. Jack, of Edinburgh. The chief value of this edition lies in the preface, a scholarly piece of work of great value, written by Thomas Graves Law, at that time a member of the London Oratory. But he was in no way responsible for the edition, which was already printed off when he was asked to contribute the preface. Mr. Law did what he could even at the last moment to remedy defects which would have seriously affected the value of the work. All the lists of authorities, as well as the foot-notes and Lord Castlemain's list, had been omitted from the text, so that he was obliged to add the authorities in one long list at the end.<sup>1</sup> Yet in spite of this the edition must be regarded as a lost opportunity: the more so as the bibliographical knowledge displayed in the preface shows how well qualified the writer was to have made this a critical edition of final value, had the publisher made him editor of the whole work.

Incidentally we may remark the high estimate which Mr. Law formed of the bishop's work: "Bishop Challoner may be said to have created our modern Catholic literature. . . . (He) inaugurated a new era in our literary history, and many of his publications are to this day standard works of doctrine or devotion."<sup>2</sup>

With regard to Challoner's historical accuracy, it is well to recall the very high regard in which Dr. Lingard held this book. His friend, the Rev. T. E. Gibson, thus describes his opinion of it:—

"Those who are old enough to remember Dr. Lingard will never forget the enthusiasm into which his usually cold nature awoke when the *Memoirs of Missionary Priests* by Bishop Challoner was mentioned. He used to declare that they were the best state papers he had ever examined and that the time

<sup>1</sup> *Tablet*, 19th March, 1887. Letter by Mr. Joseph Gillow.

<sup>2</sup> Preface, p. xxiv.



would come when they would supersede Foxe's lying stories even with many of the most prejudiced. The writer of these lines having told him that they were preparing to print in Derby a number of old Catholic books, etc., he said, 'let them publish the two parts of the *Missionary Priests* and I will take two hundred copies to give away'."

But though Challoner's work was both accurate and exact, it is no longer read as it once was, and we now have access to sources of information altogether unknown to him. Hence, without abating the high estimation in which his *Memoirs* have ever been held, we may agree with the opinion expressed by Father John Morris, S.J.,<sup>1</sup> in 1887, when, after referring to Challoner's "most conscientious care," he declared: "The time has come when a new book is required to take its place. The lives of the English martyrs must be re-written."<sup>2</sup> This work is already in progress under the editorship of Dom Bede Camm, O.S.B., with the active co-operation of Rev. J. H. Pollen, S.J. It may well be, therefore, that no further edition of the *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*, will be called for; and yet if the labour could be undertaken by a qualified scholar, and a final and critical edition of the work produced in a worthy form, such publication would not only prove of value in compiling future histories of the martyrs, but might give a new and extended life and fresh usefulness to a book which holds so honoured a place in the literature of the penal times.

<sup>1</sup> *Acts of the English Martyrs*. Edited by Rev. J. H. Pollen, S.J., 1887. Preface by Rev. J. Morris, S.J., p. vii.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE VISITATION OF BERKSHIRE AND CLOSE OF 1741.

IN the autumn of 1741 the bishop resumed his visitation, this time taking as his object the missions of Berkshire. The great Bristol Road, along which the London and Bristol coaches daily ran, passes along the Thames Valley by Maidenhead and Reading and thence on to Newbury; but the Catholic missions for the most part lay so far off the high-road that the bishop's journey was all of a cross-country character.

From his notes he seems to have gone by way of Richmond, where he states that there were two priests living, "Moore and Hansbie". But they lived in separate establishments, as the first-named, Father Richard Moore, was Jesuit chaplain to a Catholic gentleman named Neville, on Richmond Green, while Father Morgan Joseph Hansbie was vicar-provincial of the Dominicans. He also notes the presence of a priest named Williams at Isleworth—or, as he calls it, Thistleworth,—while at Twickenham there was a small Jesuit community of three fathers, but the bishop gives no particulars as to the number of Catholics in any of these places, and does not appear to have held a confirmation there at this time.

The Catholic centre at Isleworth was the Earl of Shrewsbury's house, one room of which was used as a permanent chapel. Some years later, in 1758, the parish vestrymen made a determined effort to close this domestic chapel, which is then spoken of as "a place of worship which has been in existence upwards of thirty years". This step may have been decided on in consequence of the growing number of Catholics, for whereas there were 100 in 1747, eight years later the number had risen to 150, altogether an exceptional instance of a congregation increasing instead of falling off.

The presence of priests at Twickenham is interesting from

the fact that the poet Alexander Pope, though nearing the end of his days, was still living there, and one at least of the Jesuit fathers seems to have been personally known to him. This was Father Adam Piggott, who is the original authority for the facts about Pope's translation of the hymn of St. Francis Xavier. Pope must have known, too, another of the Twickenham Jesuits, Father Walter Fleetwood, who had been, though long after the poet's own school-days, the successful headmaster of his old school at Twyford.

The great writer, always fragile, was now compelled by his health to lead a very retired life, but he was as happy as a morbidly sensitive nature could be, and he enjoyed in his luxurious retirement "honour, love, obedience, troops of friends". We know, too, that at this time he had returned to the practice of his religious duties, and was in the habit of hearing Mass in Lady Peterborough's private chapel.<sup>1</sup> When three years later, in 1744, he lay on his death-bed, it was his life-long Catholic friend, Nathaniel Hooke, who greatly to Bolingbroke's indignation, sent for a priest to give the dying poet the last sacraments. The act of charity was in no wise misplaced, for though Pope had indeed been suspected, and sometimes not without reason, of going far in sharing Bolingbroke's free-thinking views, he had never formally apostatised. While he was never forward to make public profession of his faith, and has left us no equivalent of *The Hind and the Panther*, yet the sacrifices which his adherence to the Church entailed were many and real. If he had not been a Catholic, he would in all probability have been Poet Laureate instead of Colley Cibber, and in many other ways the disabilities under which he lay made themselves felt during his life.<sup>2</sup>

It does not appear that the poet and the bishop ever met. There could have been very little in common between them. The bishop would certainly not have approved of *The Essay on Man*, and he would probably have included the famous grotto "wholly composed of shells in the rustic manner" among the "worldly toys and cheating vanities" of which he

<sup>1</sup> Chas. Butler, *Historical Memoirs of English Catholics*, 1st ed., ii., p. 323.

<sup>2</sup> As he himself once put it: "I am in the fairest way in the world of being not worth a groat, being born both a Papist and a poet" (Letter to Congreve, 16th Jan., 1714-15).

speaks so often in his *Meditations*. Poetry was not likely in itself to attract him, and he very rarely quotes a line of verse. A reference to Butler's *Hudibras* and an occasional quotation from the Catholic poet Crashaw, are the only evidences of his poetical reading.

By one of the trivial coincidences of life, Dr. Challoner passed straight from Twickenham, the scene of Pope's later years, to Binfield in Windsor Forest, where the poet had spent his youth. Several Catholics are said to have lived in the neighbourhood when the poet's father, leaving his business in Leadenhall Street, retired on his fortune to the country. Many years had passed since the Popes had left Binfield, but it was still a centre for about fifty Catholics, who were ministered to by a priest named Adams. There was also a priest at Windsor as well as at Windlesham on the borders of Surrey, both of which places were within ten miles of Binfield, but apparently the bishop did not visit them.

The next place to Binfield in his list was the large congregation of 300 Catholics in the neighbourhood of Reading, which he groups under the heads of "Reading, White-Knights, Herst and Finschams". Reading, unlike most towns, had a small congregation, and at one time the Franciscans had served a mission there. Father Bonaventure Perry, O.S.F., writing in 1704, says: "Mr. Grimston did once hire a chamber in the town of Reading for the convenience of poor Catholics to serve God, but I know not whether he has it now". Whether this humble attempt lasted after Father Grimston's departure or not, the friars of his order continued to serve the neighbouring country, and for very many years the adjoining estate of White-Knights, which belonged to Sir Henry Englefield, was a Franciscan mission. The Englefields, who were a very ancient English family, had lost by forfeiture in the reign of Elizabeth the Manor of Englefield in Berkshire, which they claimed to have held for seven centuries, and had only managed to retain their estate of Wooton Bassett in Wiltshire. Sir Henry represented the younger branch of the family, but though he had inherited the Wooton Bassett estates as well as the baronetcy in 1728, he retained his seat at White-Knights. He was a great friend of the Franciscans, and his brother Father Felix Englefield was a member of the order. The chaplain at

White-Knights was always a Franciscan, and at one time the Titular "Guardian of London" made the house his headquarters, and part of their library was kept there. When Dr. Challoner visited it on this occasion the chaplain was Father Jerome Beveridge, O.S.F.

Of the other two places named, "Herst and Finschams," no particulars seem to have survived. Herst is a village five or six miles from Reading, and "Finschams" may be Finchampstead, on the borders of Berkshire and Hants, where the Catholic family of Tattersall was settled.

Having stayed two or three days from the 8th of October at White-Knights, the bishop travelled south-west to Ufton Court, a house of which Father John Morris, S.J., has written: <sup>1</sup> "The interest of Ufton Court, the dwelling-house of the family of Perkins, is great to us Catholics, as it is a specimen of the houses of English squires, in which the Catholic religion was kept alive in the land through the evil days of persecution". As early as the time of Elizabeth it was referred to, in one of the Government papers, as "a place generally reputed to be a common receptacle for priests, Jesuits, recusants and other such evil-disposed persons". One of the family had been in the service of Blessed Margaret Pole, and loyalty to the ancient faith was hereditary in the family. Bishop Challoner's host, Mr. John Perkins, was the last of his line, and when he died many years later (30th October, 1769) he left all his "Church stuff" for the benefit of the congregation. The chaplain's name was Macarley.

Down in the valley of the Kennet close to Ufton Court lay Woolhampton and Beenham, and at both places there was a priest and small congregation. Another branch of the Perkins family lived at Beenham and their chaplain, too, at this time was a Franciscan, Father Edward Madew, who filled many important positions in his order, and who seems to have been at Ufton Court some years later when the last of that family died.

At Woolhampton the Wollascotts had a large estate. William Wollascott, the owner, had been a lad of eighteen at the time of the Stuart rising in 1715, but as his father was already dead, we find his name in the returns of "Popish

<sup>1</sup> *The Month*, vol. lxxvii., March, 1893, reviewing *The History of Ufton*, by A. Mary Sharp, London, 1893.



Recusants" who had registered their estates in pursuance with the Act of George I.<sup>1</sup> He had been married twice, and on his death the estates passed to the Earl of Fingall, who married his only daughter, Henrietta Maria, in 1755.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Challoner found about eighty Catholics at Woolhampton.

Having spent a day at each of the last-named missions, the bishop pushed on through the district in the south-west corner of the county where the scattered Catholics of Hide End, Newbury, and Great and Little Shefford—300 in all—were looked after by one priest. These places are all of interest as being old centres of the Faith even in the worst times. One of Elizabeth's spies mentions two of them in his report, saying that "as you go forthe of Mr. Wynshecomb's house towards Newberry, in the first close withoute the gate, upon the lefte hand in the hegrow there is a great oak that is hollow, and be knocking upon it you shall fynd it to sounde". This is indicated as a hiding-place. A little later he refers to the house of "Mr. Bregges, in Barksheere, at Grat Sheford". These references, though in themselves not bearing on our period, are always worth noting, because they explain the existence of these curious Catholic districts to be found in counties, in other parts of which no trace of Catholicity survived. As we have seen, many of these districts seem to be cases of slow and gradual disappearance of what had been unusually active centres in earlier days. At the time of which we are treating, some of these missions were almost at vanishing point, and several of the places which Bishop Challoner visited in 1741 are not to be found at all in the lists of visitations made later in the century, while even where the names still occur there is usually a marked diminution of numbers. It was, in fact, a time of shrinkage, in which the Catholic tradition was narrowing into ever straiter limits. The old forces were spent and the new forces that were to result in the Catholic revival, had not come into play. But in the depressing eighteenth century nothing was possible—save endurance.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Geo. I., st. 2, c. 55. "An Act to oblige Papists to register their names and real estates."

<sup>2</sup> When in 1831 the then Earl of Fingall was made a peer of the United Kingdom he took his English title from this estate, becoming Baron Fingall of Woolhampton Lodge. The ground on which Douai Abbey, Woolhampton, now stands, formerly was part of the Wollascotts' estate.

As Bishop Challoner painfully made his way from scattered group to scattered group, though the past might encourage him by magnificent memories, the present or the future could have offered but little consolation.

Imperceptible leakage and notable defection were both at work to reduce the few poor strongholds that remained, and no new victories were possible. Even a leader of commanding genius would have been overpowered by the circumstances. As things were, the patient endurance of Challoner, with its quiet endeavour to make the best of the narrowest possibilities, and to rest content in the most restricted limits, was the leadership which, if not brilliantly effective, was at least as profitable to his people as any that can be imagined.

From Great Shefford the bishop now turned his steps towards Buckland and Hendred, but before reaching them he spent two days at Fawley, the home of the Moores. This old and respected family had descended from the well-known lawyer, Sir Francis Moore, but it had come into undesirable public notice about this time because of the matrimonial difficulties that had arisen between the third baronet, Sir Richard Moore, and his wife. They had been married for many years and had no fewer than fourteen children. But their marriage proved so unhappy that it had finally resulted in a separation, though not before Sir Richard had embroiled two of the vicars apostolic, Bishops Petre and Pritchard, in a correspondence with himself, which he subsequently published with a view to the justification of his own character. After his death in 1737 Lady Moore had continued to reside at Fawley, though by the terms of her husband's will she was debarred from interfering in the education of her younger children. A year after her husband's death, her son Richard, who had succeeded him as fourth baronet, died, and the baronetcy passed to his brother John, who therefore owned the estate at the time of the bishop's visitation. Lady Moore seems to have been in failing health at the time and she died within the year. For more than a century the Moores had maintained a private chapel and a chaplain, usually a Benedictine — at this time Dom John Richard Isherwood, a very aged monk, who had been professed at Lambspring in Germany more than half a century before. They had close connection with the Benedictines, for Sir John

had both an uncle and a brother in the Order. The number of Catholics was sixty, and they depended entirely for the practice of their religion on the Moores' chapel, so that it would have gone hard with them in 1765, when Sir John Moore sold the estate, had not a Catholic family named Young lived at Whatcombe, a village close by. After the Fawley chapel was closed in 1765 the priest lived with the Youngs at Whatcombe House, and the Franciscans administered a fund for the support of a missionary in the district. If it had not been for this, the last traces of the faith would have disappeared here as they did in so many other instances.

And now from Fawley Bishop Challoner passed north over the Berkshire downs with their old national memories—memories of Ashdown fight and other battles between Christians and heathen, fought long ago by Saxons and Danes in the days when Wessex was still a kingdom and England was only beginning to be. It is the country-side from which King Alfred sprung, the king who saved Wessex which grew into our larger realm. And it is no wild supposition to suggest that the bishop had Alfred in his thoughts as he crossed these downs of Wessex, for Alfred was one of his heroes—and he thought so much of the king, that he inserted his life among those of the saints in his book, *Britannia Sancta*, although he is not canonised. The bishop, celebrating Mass in secret in that country, might well have contrasted his own day with the times of Ashdown battle, when King Ethelred was hearing Mass at the moment the news came of the Danish onslaught and “he would not suffer the divine service to be interrupted nor stir himself from that place till the Mass was finished. But then going forth, signed with the Cross of Christ, he came time enough to gain a memorable victory.”<sup>1</sup>

But besides historical associations there was, if he had known it, future association between himself and the country that lay before him. As he stood on the ridgeway which crowns the crest of the uplands, looking down towards the Thames valley, he might almost have seen, all unknowing, the little church-yard in which it was appointed him to find his last resting-place. After his long London life was over, his body was to be brought

<sup>1</sup> Challoner, *Britannia Sancta*, vol. ii., p. 225.

into this quiet Berkshire village of Milton and laid to rest in ground belonging to his friend.

But forty long years were to pass before he was to come to this peaceful end, and at the moment his duty was to push on through a tract of country in which there seem to have been few or no Catholics, until he came to Buckland near Faringdon on the northern borders of the county. Buckland, now as then belonging to the Throckmortons, has been already mentioned as one of the places where the Mass has never failed. In the early days of the change of religion it was belonging to one of the branches of the Yates family, in whose home at Lyford Blessed Edmund Campion was captured. It passed to the Throckmortons on the marriage of Mary Yate, heiress of Buckland, to Sir Robert Throckmorton of Coughton in Warwickshire. Since this marriage, which took place at the end of the seventeenth century, the Throckmortons have held both estates. As a family they had suffered much for the faith to which they have ever been loyal adherents, while at a later date one of the family played a prominent, if unfortunate, part in the difficulties attendant on the struggle for emancipation.

When Bishop Challoner first visited Buckland it was in the hands of Sir Robert Throckmorton, who held the baronetcy for the remarkable space of seventy-one years, having succeeded his father at the age of eighteen in 1720 and living until 1791 when he died at the age of eighty-nine. As Coughton remained the principal seat of the family, the establishment at Buckland was not large, including only thirty Catholics, but a priest—at this time Mr. Davies—always lived in the house.<sup>1</sup> The Throckmortons were close family connections of Bishop Petre, whose nephew John had married Anne Throckmorton, Sir Robert's sister. No doubt the close friendship known to exist between Bishop Challoner and his superior Dr. Petre would have gained for him a welcome warmer even than that which his office would by itself have secured, in such houses as Fawley and Buckland, where Bishop Petre was regarded not only as vicar apostolic but as a close kinsman.

<sup>1</sup> Since the days of Bishop Challoner, Buckland has been associated with the names of Joseph Berington the historian and Dr. Daniel Rock the well-known archæologist, the former of whom lived there as chaplain from 1793 to 1827, the latter from 1840 to 1854. The present chapel was built in 1846 during Dr. Rock's chaplaincy. Joseph Berington, who died there, is buried in the parish church.



This was the limit of his journey. From Buckland Dr. Challoner turned back and began his homeward way, reaching East Hendred on the 21st of October. This was the ancestral home of the Eystons, now as always Catholics. They have held their lands at East Hendred since the reign of Henry VI., and for three generations before that they had owned a manor at Isleworth in Middlesex. When the change of religion came, the Eystons remained faithful, and though their estates were sequestered again and again, they managed always to compound and to keep their hold. With the land they kept possession of their private chapel of St. Amand as well as their right to the Lady Chapel in the parish church. Mass is still offered weekly within the walls of St. Amand's, and in the *Catholic Directory* of to-day this chapel has the distinction of being the only one of all our churches dating back to the thirteenth century. St. Etheldreda's in Ely Place has indeed been recovered, but St. Amand's, East Hendred, has never been lost.<sup>1</sup> During the days of comparative peace under James II. St. Amand's chapel was put into thorough repair, and in September, 1687, it was opened with as much solemnity as possible amid a gathering which included seven priests and many neighbouring Catholics, the Moores of Fawley, the Perkins of Ufton, Hides of Pangbourne, Curzons and Winchcombes; and, what seems even more strange, some members of Oxford University, "Mr. John Massey, actually then Deane of Christ Church in Oxon, Mr. Robert Charnock, and one Mr. John Augustine Bernard, the former Fellow of Maudeline College and the latter Fellow of Brazen Nose College in Oxford".<sup>2</sup>

From this time the chapel served for a brief period as a public church. "From the time of its being opened till the Prince of Orange came in and invaded the nation, the Chappell was open to all comers and goers. The Blessed Sacrament constantly kept with a lamp burning; mass dayly celebrated in it. But when he and his army passed over the Golden Myle some loose fellows (whether by orders or not I cannot tell) came hyther, went into the Chappell, pretended to mock the

<sup>1</sup> The Fitzalan Chapel at Arundel is another instance of a chapel attached to a parish church, which has nevertheless remained in Catholic hands.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Charles John Eyston's account, cited by Rev. F. Thaddeus, O.F.M., *The Franciscans in England, 1600-1850*, p. 150.



priest by supping out of his chalice, which they would have taken away had it been silver, as they themselves afterwards gave out ; however, having torn down the JESUS MARIA from the altar, which holy names were printed upon pannells in the same frames where the JESUS MARIA are now wrought in bugles, they retired takinge an old suite of Church stuffe with them to Oxford, where they drest up a manikin with it, and set it up there on the topp of a bon-fyer. This happened on Monday, December 11th, 1688, and this is all the mischief they then did, besides breaking the lamp and carrying away the Sanctus bell. Mass from yt day ceast there until Monday, June 24th, 1689, when Mr. Weston by accident fortund to bee here and then he sayd Mass in it againe, and from that time till now, *i.e.* August, 1718, wee have generally used it.”<sup>1</sup>

It was probably in this chapel that Bishop Challoner said Mass for the fifty Catholics who made up the congregation, and administered confirmation to half their number. If so, we cannot doubt that it would have been a deep joy to him to offer the holy sacrifice within these doubly consecrated walls, hallowed alike by their use in the ages of faith and the days of persecution, and preserved for their original purpose by the generous fidelity of this Catholic family. It does not need to be said that such constancy was not maintained without much suffering, and the account of the successive generations of the family reads like a list of confessors. The William Eyston of the time of Charles I. “had his lands repeatedly sequestered,” and dying was succeeded by his son William, “a great sufferer during the civil wars, both on account of his religion and loyalty,” who in his turn was followed by George, “who adhering like his predecessors to the religion of his forefathers, suffered both imprisonment and sequestration”. All these descriptions are quoted from no list of sufferers for the faith, but from the matter-of-fact and genealogical pages of Burke.<sup>2</sup> The Eystons have received their reward even here, and the Blessed Sacrament has never been removed from their midst.

The grandson of the George Eyston mentioned above,

<sup>1</sup> *The Franciscans in England, 1600-1850*, pp. 151-52.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland (1834)*, vol. i., pp. 12-13.

Charles Eyston, was Bishop Challoner's host on this occasion. In 1721 he succeeded his father, who had made some name as an antiquary, and he was still a young man in the prime of life, though he did not survive for many years, but died in 1747 at the early age of forty-two. Others also of the family besides the chief were destined to be somewhat closely associated with the bishop. Mr. Eyston's niece Winefrid became the wife of Dr. Challoner's friend, Bryan Barrett of Milton, and it was owing to the bishop's intimacy with the Barretts during life that after death he was buried in their family vault. Winefrid's sister Mary became the wife of Charles Butler, whose life of the bishop has been so frequently quoted in these pages.

With his visit to the Eystons, Dr. Challoner's pastoral work in Berkshire was complete. He notes the existence of ten Catholics at Abingdon, though he did not proceed there, but from Hendred made his way south once more. He did not, however, return straight to London, but went for a 'three days' visit to Winchester, which was one of the most important places in the whole district.

No one who is not absolutely ignorant of the history of this land can visit Winchester, associated as it is with the oldest memories of our race, without realising that it holds a place to which no other of our most ancient cities can aspire. Even London may allow Winchester the precedence of gracious and memory-laden age. It is a city of the past, no longer indeed to be counted among the powers of the nation, but always in honour because of its place and importance among our origins. Winchester challenges no rivalry with the giant-cities of the North, springing up in their wealth and influence, for she has that which they have not and her past can never be taken away from her. In Bishop Challoner's time as in ours, Winchester held the position of a not unworthy county-town; but it will always be a county-town which was once the first capital of England.

Thus it was fitting that the faith should have lingered on more persistently in this city of memories than elsewhere. But certain it is that while in Canterbury, Rochester and Chichester we find small trace of any Catholics, in Winchester they remained numerous. Even in Dr. Challoner's evil times they mustered 300, not counting the neighbouring con-

gregations of Brambridge, Twyford and Tichborne, which would add 400 more. There was always a rallying point for Winchester Catholics afforded by the near neighbourhood of these Catholic mansions, and we find Jesuits in residence in or near Winchester during the reign of Charles I. But, in fact, the city had a resident priest of its own from a very early date. The existing registers of the mission date from 1721,<sup>1</sup> when the priest the Rev. Robert Berry described himself as "Robertus Parochus Wintoniensis," and there was a priest—Mr. Coddington—there before him. These priests occupied a house called St. Peter's House, where the Catholic church and presbytery still stand, and they were so zealous that in 1720 Dr. Trelawney, then bishop of the diocese, wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury with regard to the special precautions he felt bound to take: "being informed that Mass was said in the city and some priests were very busy and too successful in their perversions, I ordered my Registrar to acquaint my clergy to be on their guard and to desire the Mayor to observe the frequenters of it, and to tender the oath to all suspected persons".<sup>2</sup> Mr. Berry seems to have successfully evaded both the registrar and the mayor, for he worked at Winchester till his death in 1735, when he was succeeded by the Rev. James Shaw who remained there for ten years. Besides Mr. Shaw other priests are known who at least occasionally worked there. Thus in the registers we find the names of Richard Kendal and Robert Hyde. The latter, whose real name was Hills, was believed to be the son of Henry Hills, the Catholic printer, who was so active during the reign of James II., and whose premises were wrecked by the mob on the outbreak of the Revolution. Mr. Hyde, now an old man of seventy, took a great interest in Winchester, and manifested it specially at his death in 1745, when among other charities he bequeathed a fund producing about £17 a year to the "Incumbent of St. Peter's House," as well as a charity of £12 a year for the poor of Winchester.<sup>3</sup>

Another feature peculiar to Winchester, which partly ac-

<sup>1</sup> They were published by the Catholic Record Society, vol. i., pp. 148-243. They cover the period from 1721 to 1826 and contain many points of an interesting character.

<sup>2</sup> *The Position of the Catholic Church in England and Wales*. Edited for the XV Club; with Preface by Lord Braye, pp. 28-29.

<sup>3</sup> Winchester Account Book, 1746-1778, St. Edmund's College Archives.

counted for Catholics gathering round it, lay in the fact that they had retained the use of the ancient Catholic cemetery of St. James. In this resting-place was the grave of Dr. Challoner's own mother with its simple inscription already recorded.

At Winchester there was reason in plenty for a pastoral visit, for the bishop confirmed no less than 100 people. He remained there from the 23rd to the 26th of October, when he left, so as to be in London for the festival of All Saints.

A few more confirmations at the secret meeting-places known as "Shaw's" and "Theob." were held during November, and thus the first year of his episcopate came to a close. During the year he had completed the visitation of five counties out of the ten that formed the district, but as these were the most important he had in fact accomplished considerably more than half his task. There only remained Kent and the four counties north of the Thames in which the missions were fewer, and as a rule smaller. These he reserved for the following year, and during the winter months remained in London, attending to his customary duties and occupying his spare time in completing the second volume of the *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*. This continued and completed the lives of the martyrs, and was published during 1742.

At this time he also had the satisfaction of seeing a second edition of the *Garden of the Soul* published, which showed that his prayer-book had already found wide acceptance. This was the kind of success that he most desired, for it meant the wider influence of his work for the salvation of souls. To him the office of bishop meant nothing else, and it was in the same spirit that he now turned to a new work in a different direction, a contribution to the controversy of the times, to which it will be convenient to give a separate treatment.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE GROUNDS OF THE OLD RELIGION.

1742.

THE new book to which the bishop devoted himself on the completion of the *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*, was his longest apologetical work, and seems to have been the practical outcome of his method of bringing before all men the claims of the Catholic Church to be the only "pillar and ground of truth," the one divinely appointed authority in regard to revelation. During his twelve years' apostolate in London, he had felt keenly the difficulties involved in controversy carried on under such disadvantages. In a passage which reads like an anticipation of Newman's lecture on "Tradition as the Sustaining Power of the Protestant View," he says, "the things of this world all seem to stand against the Old Religion in this Nation: the general prejudice of the people, the penal laws, the authority of the magistrate, the interest of the clergy, the eloquence of the pulpit, the learning of the Universities, the favour of men in power, the influence of education; in a word, all temporal considerations of honour, profit and pleasure are visibly on the Protestant side". Against all this, he adds, that he presents "a set of motives of a superior nature" which will satisfy his reader "that if he has the World against him, he has at least God and His truth on his side".<sup>1</sup>

The "superior motives" were simply the arguments in favour of the divine authority of the Catholic Church. He insisted on this as the basis of his position.

"In his disputes with Protestants," Charles Butler says, "and in conversing with those who sought instruction in the Catholic faith, he always began with the authority of the Church; he recommended this practice to others. 'If you

<sup>1</sup> Preface, p. vi.



begin with any other article,' he used to say, 'the dispute is almost endless; for when you have convinced the person of the truth of that article of the Catholic faith, you must proceed to convince him of its truth in all the others. But having convinced him of the authority of the Church, disputation ends and instruction only remains. For, the authority of the Church being once admitted, all questions on the truth of the articles of her creed become useless; the only question then is, what they are.'"<sup>1</sup>

He now set to work to embody this method in a book bearing the name *The Grounds of the Old Religion*, more fully explaining his scope in the sub-title, *Some general arguments in favour of the Catholick, Apostolick, Roman Communion, collected from both Ancient and Modern Controvertists, and modestly proposed to the consideration of his Countrymen. By a Convert.*

As the book is addressed to Christians, Catholic and Protestant alike, he takes for granted that his reader believes both in God and in revelation. From these premises he argues that there can be but one true way of worship revealed by God, and that it is the duty of all men "to seek out and embrace this true way of worship which He has revealed". He is very insistent on the duty of the individual in this respect, for, though he allows invincible ignorance as a valid excuse for a worship of God not in accordance with the true faith, he carefully limits the use of this plea. "Nor can any man here plead invincible ignorance, who is not willing to make the best search he is able, and use the best means to find out and embrace this true Religion, whatever pains it may cost him, or whatever he may suffer on that account."<sup>2</sup>

His line of argument is simple and straightforward. The first ground of the Catholic claims is Holy Scripture, and in his first chapter he collects from the Old and the New Testament passages of all kinds related to the Church. From these he deduces the Catholic doctrine as to the various notes of the true Church; that it must be infallible in matters of Faith, ever numerous, always visible, governed by lawful pastors with apostolic succession. He then contends, relying mainly on historical arguments, that no body, other than the Catholic Church, can make any claim to these notes or the Scripture

<sup>1</sup> "Life of Dr. Challoner," *Cath. Mag.*, i., 650.

<sup>2</sup> Preface, p. ii.

promises. Incidentally he anticipates the continuity theory of later times, rather grimly remarking as he begins his attack, "This come-off will not serve their turn". He next deals with what he refers to as "that new scheme of Church-Unity by which some late Authors have pretended to take into the Church of Christ all sects whatsoever, provided they believe in Christ, and hold some of the chief articles of Christianity".

The second ground of the old religion he finds in the Catholic Rule of Faith, that is, the Word of God contained in Scripture and Apostolic tradition, as interpreted by the Church of God; and this he contrasts with the Protestant Rule of Faith, "which is the written Word of God interpreted by every private Christian for himself".

The rest of the book is occupied with arguments from Christian tradition as embodied in the Creed, and in the writings of the Fathers, and as illustrated by the very attempts against it both in the form of heresy and schism. He carefully explains the four marks of the Church, and ends by a line of argument directed against the reformers of the sixteenth century, both continental heresiarchs and the first prelates intruded by Elizabeth into the English sees. This argument—a favourite one with him—always consists of a historical examination of their lives and writings, with a view to showing that such men were unworthy of being accepted as religious guides, or as witnesses against the traditions of the Church. He is constant in asserting the novelty of the reformed doctrines and the unsatisfactory characters of the reformers. On this point he is like a counsel handling hostile witnesses, and lays much stress on the cross-examination as to credit. "Nothing," he writes, "makes more for the old Religion, than an impartial view of the first origin of all these new sects of pretenders to Reformation. Every circumstance that attended the change of Religion introduced by these Reformers, demonstrates that God had no hand in their work. . . . The motives which set these men to work were visibly bad: the means they employed to compass their ends were illegal and unchristian; and the fruits that ensued both in Church and State, and in the lives and manners of particulars, were such as a good tree could never have produced. All which things, as they are undeniably plain from History, clearly show that none of these new sects

have any share in the Church of Christ ; which therefore must be sought for elsewhere, *viz.* amongst the followers of the old Religion : there Christ left it and there alone we shall find it.”<sup>1</sup>

Any more detailed analysis of this book would serve no useful purpose, for though the author's arguments show no lack of learning, force and dialectical skill, they were directed against a state of thought which has very largely passed away. Here, too, as elsewhere, he relies almost solely on the logical strength of his case. The book is marked by his customary self-effacement ; and there is no effort to influence his reader by the charm of manner and subtle appeal of personality which has distinguished some of the greatest controversial writers and which is often more powerful in winning assent than argument alone. There is likewise comparatively little constructive theology in these pages, which are in the main controversial and directed towards the wants of his day. It was ever the practical need of the moment that appealed to him ; for this he was ready to “be instant in season, out of season, reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine”.<sup>2</sup> But his arguments, valid and solid in substance, would need restating to be of service in the same cause at the present time.

This is especially true of one subject which he touches upon in the lengthy appendix to his sixth chapter, and which unlike some of the other points, retains the same vital interest now as then. This is the question of Anglican Orders. But in this again, though the bishop held the view, which has been consistently maintained by English Catholics as a body from 1560 to the present time, the arguments which he alleges in support of his view would need large revision in the light of modern research. He repeated the traditional reasoning alleged by earlier writers from Champney in the seventeenth century to Constable, his own contemporary ; but the Catholic tradition on the question was based on practical conviction formed before any argument was necessary. When the controversy arose, and attention was drawn to the matter, Catholic practice was already firmly established, so that arguments in support of it were somewhat in the nature of after-thoughts. As Canon Estcourt pithily states it : “The Anglicans draw their facts from

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 212-13.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 2.

*a priori* arguments, while the Catholics rest their arguments on a preconceived theory of facts. The result is not satisfactory on either side. Each is able to point out the weakness of his adversary's case, but neither of them to establish his own."<sup>1</sup> Since these words were written, the decision of Leo XIII. has finally closed the question, and the Bull *Apostolicae Curae* is for Catholics the last word in the matter. But before this pronouncement, increased facilities for historical research and the study of later theological decisions had led Catholic scholars to realise that the arguments formerly alleged were of very varying degrees of cogency. The fifteen propositions in which Dr. Challoner treats the question could not now be accepted without much qualification. For instance, he admits, though in a very modified form, some truth in the "Nag's Head" story, which has long since been abandoned by every serious writer as wholly unworthy of credence. He alludes to it as "a current opinion among the Catholics from the days of Queen Elizabeth, that Matthew Parker (from whom the whole English Protestant hierarchy derives itself) was consecrated, if I may be allowed to use that term, at the Nag's Head in Cheapside by John Scory's laying the Bible upon his head, with these words: Take thou authority to preach the Word of God sincerely".

The fact that he gives a careful summary of six different traditions on the subject is at least a guarantee of his good faith, but none the less his use of the story as a proof, together with some other points, suffices to deprive his treatment of the question of any practical utility to-day, notwithstanding the force with which he presents the subject as a whole.

Some additional actual interest was given to the subject just at this time by the presence in London of the well-known Abbé Le Courayer, a Canon Regular of St. Geneviève at Paris, who, some years before, had published the celebrated work in defence of Anglican orders, which he had written with the assistance of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Wake. To find a champion in the person of a learned Catholic priest was an agreeable surprise for the Anglican clergy, who showed the author every consideration. In France, however, it was recognised that apart from the question of Anglican orders, with

<sup>1</sup> *The Question of Anglican Ordinations Discussed*, p. 169.



which the French ecclesiastics were not concerned, his book contained many errors of doctrine concerning the Sacrifice of the Mass, the Real Presence, the Priesthood and other points. Thereupon censures ensued, his views were condemned by the Archbishop of Paris, again by a meeting of bishops under Cardinal di Bissi, and finally by Pope Benedict XIII. Under these circumstances Père Le Courayer, unwilling to make his submission, took refuge in England, where his way was made smooth before him. He was brought to London by Lord Percival's coach and six, and was desired by that nobleman to regard his house as his own. Next day he was carried to Lambeth, where he was received by the Archbishop of Canterbury who made him a present. This form of compliment became popular, and was adopted, not only by other Anglican prelates and nobles, but even by the Government, which allowed him an annuity of £100. He had already received a doctorate in divinity from Oxford; and he was finally taken up with enthusiasm by the queen, who desired him to spend one evening at Court every week. But though on the one hand labouring under the charge of unorthodoxy, and on the other treated with most flattering attention by the great world, Le Courayer persistently refused to regard himself as anything but a Catholic, and was in the habit of attending the embassy chapels, and presenting himself for Communion. Dr. Challoner, however, in view of the censure passed on him by the Pope, would not admit him to the Sacraments, and according to Milner, he "was inflexible in requiring a retractation of his errors, as public as his profession of them had been, and likewise his return to religious obedience, before he would admit him to the participation of the sacraments, and by his orders Father Courayer was always publicly passed over by the officiating priest when he presented himself among others at the altar rail".<sup>1</sup>

Still Le Courayer would not give up the name of Catholic, though his later writings show how far he had drifted from the teaching of the Church; and his life spent in society amid ease and comfort offers strange contrast to the obscure and laborious lives of his English brother-priests. For nearly fifty years he continued to live in London, where his bright and charming manners made him many friends from the Royal family down-

<sup>1</sup> Milner, *Life*, p. 29.



wards. But though he spent much of his time as a guest in great houses, his own manner of life remained frugal, and his charities to the poor, especially to prisoners, were great. For a time he lodged over a toy-shop in Holborn, where he was visited, among other friends, by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who in her accustomed vivacious style has left a description of the abbé in "a flowered dressing-gown and a cap with a gold band" receiving his guests.<sup>1</sup> From time to time he published fresh works, including translations of Father Paul Sarpi's *History of the Council of Trent* and Sleidan's *History of the Reformation*. Though he occasionally attended Anglican worship, he never conformed to the Church of England. Nor did he ever make his submission to the Catholic Church, but died in the year 1776, at the age of ninety-five, declaring that he died a true member of the Catholic Church "without approving many of the superstitions which have been introduced into it". He was buried in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey.

At the time of which we are speaking, however, he was still in the prime of life and had only been in London fourteen or fifteen years. His continued presence, coupled with the fact that his book in favour of Anglican orders had recently been answered in English by Father John Constable, S.J., who wrote under the name of Clerophilus Alethes, combined to make the validity of Anglican ordination one of the questions of the day, and it was probably on this account that the bishop treated it at such comparative length in *The Grounds of the Old Religion*.

As this was the first controversial book which he had published since his *Catholic Christian Instructed* had drawn on him the active resentment of Dr. Conyers Middleton, he seems to have had in mind the possibility of a similar outburst. Having alluded in his preface to the likelihood of a reply being made to his book, he expresses a hope that any writer undertaking an answer will "instead of satire and misrepresentation employ solid arguments". But he continues: "if instead of this he will call in to his assistance the *brachium seculare*, as some have done, or otherwise seek by violence to stop the mouth of truth and suppress its light; he will, in the judgment

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.*

of all the world, dishonour the cause and betray its weakness, which in a free nation dares not stand the test of an impartial examination". It was probably with some idea of putting obstacles in the way of the "brachium seculare" that the book purports to be printed at "Augusta," although it bears on every page the impress of a London printer of the period. It ran through three editions within the next ten years. The fifth edition (London, J. P. Coghlan, 1798) appeared after the bishop's death, and is remarkable because Milner's *Life of Dr. Challoner* was written as an introduction to it.

While dealing with the bishop's controversial work of this period, it will be convenient to mention his pamphlet called *A Letter to a Friend concerning the Infallibility of the Church of Christ*—although, in fact, this was not published till the following year. It was written in answer to a controversial tract entitled *An humble address to the Jesuits by a dissatisfied Roman Catholick*.

The "dissatisfied Roman Catholick," however, proved to be none other than Mr. J. R., his former antagonist, whom he had already answered in *The Unerring Authority of the Catholic Church* eleven years before, and whom he now describes as "a Minister of the Kirk who has for these forty years been a zealous holder-forth against the Old Church of Scotland". Challoner had no difficulty in again exposing him. Having again briefly explained the Catholic theology of the Church in four *Remarks*, he continues, "Take these four remarks along with you, and you will quickly see that the fine reasonings of Mr. R. and his friends will be found to be no better than Children's Arrows and mere Cob-webs".

The pamphlet being in the form of a letter is signed R. D. (Ricardus Debovensis) and is dated London, 8th December, 1742. Unsold copies were subsequently bound with the reprints of the earlier tracts in the *Collection of Controversial Tracts published by R. C., D.D.*, which was issued in 1747.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### VISITATION OF KENT AND THE COUNTIES NORTH OF THE THAMES.

1742.

EARLY in July Dr. Challoner resumed the work of visiting the district, but the notes he made during this second year are not so methodical as before. He no longer records the names of the priests and he rarely gives the dates of his visits.

He began with Kent, but his journey was a short one, for we find from his letter-book that he was back in London on the 16th instant. The shortness of his absence is, however, explained by the fact that the Kentish missions, few in number as they were, lay comparatively close together,—the chief Catholic houses being in the direction of Canterbury. There were four of special note, Linstead Lodge, Nash Court, Calehill and Hales Place. If to these be added Scotney Castle, which is on the borders of Sussex, the Catholic resources of Kent were practically exhausted, as the other centres were of less importance. Indeed, at the end of Dr. Challoner's life there were only four priests resident in the county. In 1742 things do not seem to have been quite so bad, for the bishop in his lists does give some other names, though the indications afforded are of the slightest.

Sometimes he groups together two or three places but gives no particulars beyond the numbers of the congregation, as, for instance, "Milgate, Chatham, Whetenhall, etc. 56". From the fact that he occasionally adds "MS. Darell" to Milgate it may be that this place was a dower-house belonging to the Darells. "Whetenhall," again, seems to be the name of the family rather than that of a house, and the Whetenhalls had an estate near the villages of East Malling and West

Peckham in the neighbourhood of Maidstone, which was sufficiently near Chatham to make it a possible district for one priest to serve. The grouping, too, is not always clear. Thus he brackets Farnborough and Dartford together in one list, and Farnborough and Westbrook in a second, though in another note Westbrook is included under Scotney. From such slight indications it is very difficult to discover the whereabouts of these hidden missions or to gain any information as to their patrons or their history. Taking them altogether, however, we may roughly estimate the number of Kentish Catholics at this time as under 300.

The chief of them was Henry, tenth Lord Teynham, a member of the Roper family into which Blessed Thomas More's favourite daughter Margaret had married, although Lord Teynham himself, tracing his lineage through a collateral branch, was not actually descended from the martyr. This young peer, who was little more than thirty years of age at the time of the bishop's visit, was so staunch a Catholic that he was described by Dr. Challoner as "the chief support of religion in Kent". This was the more remarkable as his father, the eighth baron, had apostatised shortly after the 1715 rebellion, and the family by his third wife were brought up in the Church of England. His change of religion did not, however, affect his elder sons, who remained Catholics. They were Philip, who succeeded him, but died unmarried at the age of twenty in 1727, and Henry, who became Lord Teynham on his brother's death. The latter willingly gave up the advantages of conformity, his seat in the House of Lords and all hope of a brilliant career, a sacrifice the worthier because he was naturally of an energetic disposition. He found scope for his activity, however, in the management of his large estates; and having married Catharine the daughter of John Powell, an Oxfordshire Catholic, he settled down contentedly as a country gentleman. His home was at Linstead Lodge on the Dover Road between Rochester and Canterbury, and here he received the bishop in 1742. He had four little sons growing up, and the sight of this good Catholic home in its simplicity and self-sacrifice seems to have touched the bishop's heart, for on his return to London he addressed to his host a letter under the formality of which we can see something of

the fatherly love which led him to write so gravely and directly on "the one thing necessary".

"July 16, 1742.

"MY LORD,

"I should be highly ungrateful if I did not upon all occasions acknowledge the great favours I have received from yr. Ldp. and your worthy Lady: for which I shall be ever obliged to pray for you both, not being able to make you any better return, for your kindnesses. I have here sent some few books of my publishing to employ a part of your leisure hours. The two volumes of the Memoirs, in which you will find many rare examples of Christian piety and fortitude will encourage your Ldp. (whom divine providence seems to have designed for the chief support of Religion in Kent) to follow with a constancy worthy of a Christian nobleman the happy and glorious path of virtue and religion, in spite of all opposition of the world, the flesh, and the Devil. The other tracts, especially *The Garden of the Soul* and *Think Well On't*, will, I hope, be a help to you in your devotions and furnish you matter of consideration & prayer for some little time at least, every day. The care yr. Ldp. takes to avoid idleness, which is the mother of all vice, by employing yourself in your Farm is very edifying. I wish all noblemen in this would follow your example. But there is still another business, My Lord, which ought to be taken to heart above all things, and that is the concern of your Soul & Eternity. This life is short, but the other has no end. And death, which makes no distinction between the King and the Beggar, will quickly be with us, and will convince us all that great truth Vanity of vanities and all is vanity, but to love God and to serve him alone. Take it not then amiss if I recommend to yr. Ldp. to read every day one short chapter in that little book entitled *Think Well On't* and to allow yourself regularly at least one quarter of an hour in the morning and as much in the evening to be spent in prayer. This will draw down God's blessing upon yourself, and family. This is a tribute you owe to the Almighty, who gives you all; this will be a good example to others whose eyes are ever attentive to the actions of noblemen. This, in fine, however disagreeable it may be apprehended at first, will quickly become pleasant



and delightful: without this daily support of prayer and consideration, the poor soul will easily decline into the broad road, which leads to the second and eternal death. That this may never be your misfortune, but that God may always preserve and bless yr. Ldp. and family, shall be the constant prayer of,

“M. L. yr. Ldp’s  
“Most obliged affectionate humble Servt.”

[R. CHALLONER.]

Though Linstead Lodge was thus a centre of good the number of Catholics was not large, being only eighty in all. In more dangerous times the publicity involved in its situation on the Dover Road was not favourable for a Catholic settlement. These succeeded better in more obscure situations, where there was less chance of the hostile demonstrations which occasionally happened in times of anti-Catholic outbursts. It was, for instance, here that in 1688, when the Revolution broke out, Father Thomas Kingsley, S.J., Lord Teynham’s chaplain, had to spend days hiding in the woods, exposed to cold and hunger, drenched with incessant rain, and when at length he took refuge in a house formerly friendly, he was promptly handed over to the tender mercies of a violent mob, while such continued ill-usage marked his journey to London that he thought himself happy when he was lodged in Newgate, where he remained a prisoner for over a year.

Not far from Linstead, and still on the road towards Canterbury, lay Nash Court, which from the days of Edward IV. had belonged to the Hawkins family, who were old in the county even then. They were a long-lived race; Thomas Hawkins, who lived through the Reformation, had been born in the reign of Richard III., and yet lived to see all the changes of the Tudors from the first to the last. Had he survived another year he would have seen the Spanish Armada, but he died in 1587, having spent a century and a year of troubled life. His descendants were all staunch Catholics, some priests, others nuns, while there was always a regular inheritance of the estate from father to son in the direct line. They were students too in their way. Sir Thomas Hawkins of the days of Charles I. had translated *The Holy Court* by Nicholas Coussin, a work

long held in great esteem, while his brothers, John the doctor of medicine and Henry the Jesuit, also wrote and translated books still sometimes to be met with.

The family had paid the penalty of their loyalty in the usual sufferings, but more particularly in the unwarranted plundering of their mansion-house after the earlier Stuart rising in 1715. The Protestant mob that broke in, wrecked or carried off everything, papers, pictures and library alike. The ruined house was rebuilt by the then squire, Thomas Hawkins, who was still living when Bishop Challoner visited the house, and who continued to reside there till he died in 1766 in the ninety-third year of his age; but with his grandson the line came to an end and the estates were divided between the four co-heiresses, Lady Teynham and her sisters. A curious relic of this private chapel is preserved at Canterbury in the inlaid *predella* which was used for centuries at Nash Court and was presented to the Catholic Church at Canterbury when the old chapel of the Hawkins family was closed.

Closely connected with the Hawkinses was the third great Kentish Catholic family, the Darells of Calehill. Another branch of the same stock held Scotney Castle. The family name appears on the Roll of Battle Abbey, and branches claiming descent from the Norman William de Orell, Dayrell or Darell, are to be found in various parts of England. The Calehill Darells were always Catholics, although the knight of Elizabeth's time—Sir John Darell—had married the daughter of Robert Horne, the Protestant bishop who was intruded into the See of Winchester by that sovereign. It was an odd strain of blood for a Catholic race, but did not prevent several members of the family entering religion, and the Darells showed a special predilection for the Society of Jesus. In 1720 the branch of the family owning Scotney Castle died out, and that property passed to George Darell, the second son of John Darell of Calehill, while his elder brother Philip succeeded his father at Calehill, and rebuilt the family mansion. There were only forty Catholics there, and the stationary character of these country missions is shown by the fact that nearly a hundred and twenty years later the Catholics attending the private chapel at Calehill House were only reckoned as fifty. Mass is still said at Calehill.

Between visiting Nash Court and Calehill the bishop had been to Canterbury, or at least to Hales Place close by, where about thirty Catholics met for Mass at the house of Sir John Hales. Sir John's father, Edward Hales, had been the trusted companion of James II., who first knighted him and afterwards created him Earl of Tenterden. He was the King's companion in the momentous flight from London, when James crossed the Thames in a wherry from Millwall, and threw the Great Seal of England into the river as he passed Lambeth.

Sir Edward Hales died in 1695 leaving his Jacobite earldom, as well as his unquestioned baronetcy, to his son John, who was now Dr. Challoner's host. This gentleman did not actively support the Stuarts, and indeed had been offered a peerage by George I., which he declined as he was not allowed to claim the Earldom of Tenterden. Sir John lived at Hales Place in the strictest retirement, until his death in 1744, two years after the bishop's visit.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Challoner, having in the meantime paid a brief visit to London, did not reach Scotney Castle on the extreme southern boundaries of the county till the 22nd of August. Scotney was an ancient stronghold with drawbridge and moat, and great stone gateway flanked by towers, standing partly in Kent, partly in Sussex, on the road leading to Rye. It once belonged to Henry Chicheley, Archbishop of Canterbury, who in the fifteenth century settled it on his niece, Florence, on her marriage with one of the Yorkshire Darells. The Darells of Calehill descended from this Darell by his first wife; those of Scotney from this second marriage. Scotney Castle always remained a Catholic house, and in the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. it is mentioned in Government records as one of the refuges of "the Jesuits that lurk in England". In the time of King James, Father Richard Blount, S.J., effected a most exciting escape from the castle then in the hands of the searchers.<sup>2</sup> At length after seven generations of unbroken descent, the male line came to an end, and Scotney Castle passed in 1720, as we

<sup>1</sup> He was succeeded by his grandson, Edward, the fifth baronet, who pulled down the ancient house and built the existing mansion, now in the occupation of the French Jesuits. The baronetcy became extinct on the death of his son, the sixth baronet, in 1829 and the family died out in 1885.

<sup>2</sup> See Father Morris, S.J., *Troubles of Our Catholic Forefathers*, Series I.

have seen, to George, the second son of John Darell of Calchill, who held it for many years before he was succeeded by his son John, in whose time it was sold with all the estates. This unfortunate sale by which another historic mansion passed out of Catholic hands did not, however, take place till 1774, so that during the greater part of Dr. Challoner's episcopate there was a priest resident there to look after the few scattered Catholics of the neighbourhood, who numbered only forty in all.

A week after his visit to Scotney we find the bishop at Battle in Sussex. The abbey and manor of Battle were then owned by Lord Montague whose chief seat was at Cowdray, and it is to be feared that the financial difficulties of the family had disastrous effects on the historic ruins of Battle Abbey, for it is recorded that Francis, fourth viscount, demolished the great kitchen in order to profit by the sale of the materials, while his brother and successor destroyed a further portion of the abbey for the same regrettable purpose. The owner of Cowdray and Battle in 1742 was Anthony, sixth Viscount Montague, who was never a fervent Catholic and who actually lapsed altogether for a time, although he was reconciled on his death-bed in 1787, and endeavoured to make public amends to his tenants and servants for the scandal he had caused.

From Battle in the south of Sussex, the bishop went direct to the extreme north of Buckinghamshire in order to begin from there the visitation of the counties north of the Thames. He was at Battle on the 29th of August, and at Weston Underwood, Buckinghamshire, on the 5th of September. Probably he returned through London and spent a day or two there, as from London he could go direct to Weston Underwood by the Northampton coach, which used to run through St. Alban's, Dunstable and Newport Pagnell.

Weston Underwood was not only an important Catholic household in itself, but was a suitable centre from which he could do the little work that there was to be done in the counties of Buckingham and Bedford, for unfortunately in those parts Catholics were very few in number. Apart from the congregation at Weston which numbered 200, there were hardly more than 100 other Catholics in all Buckinghamshire, and about the same number, or rather less, in the county of Bedford. The bishop's plan was to stay at Weston Underwood and from



there to visit the Bedfordshire missions, and then to make his way south, stopping at Bierton in the centre and Peterley in the south of Buckinghamshire. Other Catholic houses were so scattered that he seems to have felt it more practicable for those who needed confirmation to come to him, than for him to spend time and expense in visiting outlying centres, with a mere handful of a congregation in each. Thus from Weston he could reach the eighty Catholics at Buckingham, Salden and the adjacent districts, while at Bierton he was accessible to the few who lived at Brill and Ickford, and lastly Peterley served for Brinkhurst and the neighbourhood.

We will, then, follow the bishop first to Weston Underwood, the property of Sir Robert Throckmorton, of whom some account has been given in connection with the mission of Buckland in Berkshire. Sir Robert himself was nearing his fortieth year and had married his second wife four years previously, having one son and one daughter by his first marriage. With the household and the neighbouring Catholics the congregation numbered 200, and they used to assemble for Mass in a chapel formed out of the attics on the west side of the house. When, nearly a century later, the old mansion at Weston was pulled down, two or three forgotten hiding-holes were found, one of which was a small room immediately under the chapel and communicating with it by a ladder and trap-door.<sup>1</sup> In his *Old English Catholic Missions* Mr. John Orlebar Payne prints extracts from the old registers during the period 1710-23, from which we learn that under the zealous care of a Benedictine monk, Dom William Blakey, O.S.B., there was considerable activity, the number of conversions being especially noteworthy. Many of these were dependants on the estate. Thus we find recorded the reception into the church of "William Ready our Shepherd," "Thomas Gilloway, a young man, the keeper's son, in the chase, in a fitt of sickness," and the gardener's wife, "Anne Osburn, uxor Egidii Osburn, hortulani nostri". Others were of higher estate, while among the congregation were some members of well-known families such as

<sup>1</sup> When the house was thus demolished and the old chapel consequently done away with, a new chapel was formed out of one of the wings in the north front, and part of the west front was left standing as a presbytery (Payne, *Old English Catholic Missions*, xix.).



Fortescue of Salden, and a cadet-branch of the Wrights of Kelvedon Hall, Essex. Some of the entries relate to outlying districts, and other villages such as Turvey, of which mention will be made later, and Olney, so inseparably associated with the poet Cowper, who lived there at a somewhat later date. The poet, indeed, became on intimate terms with Sir Robert's grandson, John Courtenay Throckmorton,<sup>1</sup> and his wife, and it was owing to his friendship for them that he suppressed a bitter passage against Catholics that he had written in *The Task*. At one time he actually took up his residence in the village of Weston, and his intercourse with the Throckmortons became so close as to excite the disapproval of his friend and spiritual guide, the well-known evangelical writer, John Newton.<sup>2</sup>

Bishop Challoner confirmed sixty people at Weston Underwood on the 5th of September, and on the following day crossed the borders of Bedfordshire and confirmed again at Turvey. This had been a Catholic centre because it belonged to the Earls of Peterborough, who held the Barony of Mordaunt of Turvey, and who, though not always Catholics, had Catholic associations and connections of an intimate kind. The Mordaunts had acquired their estates there in early Plantagenet times, and at length in the reign of Henry VIII. the barony was created. The fifth baron gave up the faith during the reign of James I. and was rewarded by the Earldom of Peterborough, but his son, the second earl, returned to the Church in the reign of James II., and his impeachment for so doing was resolved on by the House of Commons after the accession of William and Mary. The proceedings were, however, dropped, and on the earl's death in 1697 he was succeeded by a non-Catholic, his nephew, the brilliant and erratic Earl of Peterborough, whose Spanish campaign during the reign of Anne met with such phenomenal success. Some years before his death he secretly married a Catholic lady, Anastasia Robin-

<sup>1</sup>Afterwards one of the moving spirits on the Catholic Committee and a foremost opponent of Bishop Milner.

<sup>2</sup>Another name closely connected with Olney is that of Thomas Scott, the famous Low Church commentator on the Bible, who succeeded Newton as curate there, and of whom Newman speaks as "the writer who made a deeper impression on my mind than any other, and to whom (humanly speaking) I almost owe my soul" (*Apologia*, ch. i.).

son, though he only acknowledged her as his wife a few months before his death in 1740.<sup>1</sup> This lady, who was the friend of Pope, was a well-known figure in literary circles and a constant help to Catholics, as she maintained a chapel in her house. When Dr. Challoner reached Turvey, Lady Peterborough, who does not seem to have ever actually lived there, had been a widow for two years, and the family estates had again passed out of Catholic hands.<sup>2</sup>

Another Turvey family, whose name occurs in lists of recusants and other records, were the Brands, children of Thomas and Margaret Brand,<sup>3</sup> some of whom were still living there at the time of the bishop's visit. With Turvey he brackets in his note Chanson and Shefford. In a list of diocesan funds, written many years later, he gives the details of a fund of £200, known as Edward Hunt's fund, which was to be applied to "the priest assisting at Chanson in Bedfordshire". And he there notes, "There is no priest nor congregation at Chanson. The income is applied to Mr. Robinson at Shefford in the same county."

The three places, Turvey, Chanson and Shefford, only mustered fifty-five Catholics between them, and he does not seem to have visited the last-named at all. The chief Catholic there was Mr. William Noddings, a tradesman, who died three years later, in 1745, leaving all his property, subject to annuities to his two daughters, for the foundation of a mission. The house was occupied both as an inn and a butcher's shop, and Mass was said in an upper room, upon "a common deal dressing table with a drawer in it and a stone let in at the top". This venerable relic of those times is still in use as an altar in the tribune of the present church.<sup>4</sup> The house has been the presbytery ever since, but it is now surrounded by the handsome buildings of the Church and St. Francis's Home and Orphanage for Boys, a work which has nobly continued the spirit of faith and generosity of its original benefactor.

<sup>1</sup> *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, vol. xlix., s.v. Robinson, Anastasia, Countess of Peterborough.

<sup>2</sup> The Barony of Mordaunt of Turvey is now held by the Duke of Gordon.

<sup>3</sup> See Payne, *O. E. Cath. Missions*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>4</sup> See the interesting history of the mission published by the late Very Rev. Henry E. King, under the title *An Ancient Catholic Mission and its Modern Development*.

These three poor missions with their fifty-five souls and the small group at Woburn were the sole representatives of Catholicity in Bedfordshire, and after the one confirmation at Turvey the bishop returned into Buckinghamshire. But even there, once he had left Weston Underwood, things were not much better. In the town of Buckingham itself and the district he reckoned there were eighty Catholics, but this number included those at Salden. This had been the seat of the Fortescues, descendants of the martyr Blessed Adrian Fortescue, who suffered under Henry VIII. in 1539, but the fourth and last baronet, Sir Francis Fortescue, had died in 1729, and so that branch of the family failed. By his will Sir Francis left £200 in trust to apply the interest towards the maintenance of a Jesuit to help Catholics in the neighbourhood of Salden: the Rev. John Chapman, S.J., about this time was resident at Whitgrave close by.

At Bierton, where he next confirmed on the 10th of September, there were even fewer, thirty-five being the total. To these might be added Catholics living at Brill and Ickford, villages which lay at some distance on the west border of the county. At Brill the Belsons, who had intermarried with the family of Perkins from Beenham, Berkshire, resided, while at Ickford was the home of a family named Phillips who were connected by marriage with the poet Milton, and whose history has several points of interest from a Catholic standpoint. The head of the family was Thomas Phillips, an attorney, who had been converted by the influence and example of his uncle, William Lyde, otherwise Joyner. This gentleman, who had resigned a fellowship of Magdalen College, Oxford, to become a Catholic, passed through many strange vicissitudes during a long life. At one time he was in the service of Queen Henrietta Maria; at another, and that for long years together, steward of the Abbey of St. Martin, Pontoise; in 1687 he was restored to his fellowship by James II. only to be again expelled by the Revolution; in the following year, as an author, he wrote a tragedy, much poetry and a life of Cardinal Pole. More than once, when prosecuted for his religion, he had taken refuge in his sister's house at Ickford, and ultimately he took up his abode in the village, occupying a thatched cottage in which he led a retired and mortified life till his death in 1706. When his influence resulted in the conversion of his nephew, the young man's father was so angry that

he partially disinherited him and by his will left the family manor of Tetsworth, not to his son, but to his son-in-law. And even the property which he did leave him was hedged round with the condition "so long as he shall be in a capacity and condition to receive the same". Thomas Phillips, however, was true to his faith, and brought up his family of nine children as Catholics. Of these the only daughter became Abbess of the Benedictines at Ghent, while his eldest son, also called Thomas, became a priest and a writer of considerable note. Inheriting his great-uncle's interest in Cardinal Pole, he wrote a new life of the cardinal, which caused a great sensation at the time of its publication and led to a great amount of controversy. As a young man he became a Jesuit, but subsequently withdrew from the society,<sup>1</sup> and at the time of which we are speaking he had obtained, through the influence of the Young Pretender, a canonry at Tongres, accompanied by a dispensation allowing him to labour in England. He was known to Bishop Challoner, in whose district he occasionally did duty.

Leaving Bierton the bishop went to his last halting-place in the county, Peterley Manor, which had long been in the hands of a cadet branch of the Dormer family. Owing to the extinction of the older branches in 1712, the title and family estates came to Charles Dormer of Peterley, whose brother Robert thenceforth lived at Peterley till his death in 1729. When Bishop Challoner was there Mr. Dormer's widow was still living in the neighbourhood, and there was altogether a congregation of ninety Catholics.

The head of the family at this time was Charles, Lord Dormer, who had entered the Society of Jesus and had a great reputation for sanctity and zeal. When he succeeded to the barony on his father's death in 1728, he resigned the family estates to his younger brother John, and being a Jesuit never assumed the title. There is a tradition at Liverpool that while he was in that city he was arrested as being a priest, and being brought before the mayor, who asked him who he was, "I am Charles Lord Dormer," he replied; "I have laid my coronet at the foot of the Cross and am now a humble priest of the Society of Jesus". The impression created by this was so great that he was at once discharged. Notwithstanding his

<sup>1</sup> Some years before his death in 1774 he was readmitted into the society.



peerage, he continued to labour as a priest all his life until his death in 1761. This took place at Peterley House, and he is buried in Great Missenden Churchyard.

Dr. Challoner confirmed nineteen persons at Peterley on the 12th of September, and having thus within the space of one week completed his work in these two counties of Buckingham and Bedford, he was now ready to turn his attention to Essex.

The mainstay of the faith in Essex not only at this time, but long before and after, was found in the Lords Petre and the various branches of the Petre family. The barons themselves, who took their title from Writtle Park, had also estates at Ingatestone, Thorndon and Crondon Park, but besides these, there were Petres of Bellhouse, Petres of Fidlers, and Petres of Cranham.

The founder of the family fortunes was William Petre, a Devonshire man, who first rose into prominence during the reign of Henry VIII. through the influence of Anne Boleyn, to whose brother he had been tutor. Being a man of undoubted ability, he made himself so useful, not only to Cromwell, but to the king, that his continued success was assured. He was an active instrument of Cromwell in the suppression of the monasteries, and, in fact, laid the foundations of his wealth out of Church lands, Ingatestone itself being part of the spoil of St. Mary's Abbey, Barking.<sup>1</sup> During the reign of Edward VI. he grew richer and more powerful, but in spite of his record as a spoiler of the Church he was dexterous enough to retain under Queen Mary his position as Secretary of State. Dodd, indeed, allows him every virtue except that of religion, and he seems to have been a wise and useful servant of the State in many ways. On the death of Mary, his compliance in religious matters was even sufficient to attempt another change, and he remained in office under Elizabeth, though his influence speedily declined, and in 1566 he retired to his manor at Ingatestone in Essex, where he died as a Catholic in 1572. It is a striking fact that the descendants of one who had played such an equivocal part at the height of the religious crisis, should have been such staunch Catholics as the Petres in all their branches have ever remained.

<sup>1</sup> It is only fair to add that he made a very charitable use of his wealth. Generally for his career see *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, vol. xlv., pp. 93 sqq.



Sir William's widow, Lady Petre, was a fervent Catholic, and it was her good fortune to have as chaplain one of the English martyrs, Blessed John Payne, whose first arrest took place at Ingtestone itself in 1577. The future martyr, however, was on this occasion discharged, and it was not until 1582 that he won his crown, his connection with Essex and the Petres being emphasised by the selection of Chelmsford as the scene of his martyrdom. Under James I. the family retained the royal favour, and Sir William's only son, John, was one of the new peers created by that king in 1603; on which occasion he took the title which his descendants have since borne, Baron Petre of Writtle, Writtle being a village to the west of Chelmsford, near which lay his estate of Writtle Park.

From the time of his successor, the second Lord Petre, the origin of the other branches of the family is traced, for his two brothers, John<sup>1</sup> and Thomas, settled respectively at Fidlers and Cranham Park and founded the families of Petre which are distinguished by those names. From the Fidlers branch Dr. Petre, the Vicar Apostolic of London, and his nephew Francis, Vicar Apostolic of the Northern District, were descended. Old Bishop Petre himself resided much at his nephew's house, and Dr. Challoner notes that the old man served the mission himself. The nephew, John Petre, was the last of the Fidlers line, and the Cranham branch was extinct some years before 1742, but the family at Bellhouse was still in existence.

Thus it happened that out of nine Essex missions mentioned by Dr. Challoner in his lists, no fewer than six were either supported by the Petres or were on their estates. When he arrived to make his first visitation among them towards the end of September, 1742, the hand of sorrow and anxiety lay upon the family, for only two months before, on the 2nd of July, Robert James, eighth Lord Petre, had died in his thirtieth year, leaving his new-born son, Robert Edward, to succeed him, so that the misfortune of a long minority of twenty-one years with all its attendant disadvantages had to be faced. The widowed Lady

<sup>1</sup> According to Burke (*Burke's Commoners*, vol. iii.) John Petre, through whom the Fidlers family traced descent, was not the brother but the son of the second lord. The statement in the text is, however, supported by the pedigree drawn up by a member of the family.

Petre was the daughter of the Earl of Derwentwater, who had been executed for his share in the 1715 rebellion and who was regarded almost in the light of a martyr by many Catholics of that age. After the death of her husband Lady Petre did not continue in Essex, but went to live at Cheam in Surrey, where she maintained a private chapel and a priest.

This state of things, coupled with the fact that the vicar apostolic, living at Fidlers, had the district constantly under observation, probably accounts for the rapid way in which Dr. Challoner performed his Essex visitation. Thus on one day, the 26th of September, he disposed of three missions, Fidlers, Ingatestone and Cranham Park. Though the Petres had severed their connection with Cranham Park there was still a congregation of 150 people there, under the care of a priest named Parkinson, probably the Rev. Richard Parkinson, S.J., who is known to have been working in the neighbourhood about this time. Of Fidlers, sometimes spelt Fithelers and even Fittrelres, we have already spoken as in the possession of John Petre, nephew of the vicar apostolic, who lived with him there and ministered to the small congregation of forty.

Ingatestone Hall, which as we have seen was originally the chief seat of the founder of the family, has long since given place to Thorndon Hall as their principal residence, but this was not always so. In Cox's *Survey of Essex*, published in 1716, the author speaking of Ingatestone says "the family more constantly reside here than at Thorndon, tho' that is reputed the nobler mansion". Cox with evident delight works out an elaborate play of words on the Latin name *Gingad-petram*, which he makes equivalent to Petre's Ing, though he is well aware that the place was called Yng-at-Stone long before any Petre had set foot in it. In Dooks's *Dooms-day book* it was held by the Abbess and nuns of Barking and it belonged to that abbey till its dissolution, when it was granted to "Mr. Dr. Petre" in reward for his distinguished services, more especially exhibited in the suppression of religious houses, an acquisition of property for which a special dispensation from Pope Paul IV. was afterwards found necessary.

To Ingatestone must be added Crondon Park near Stock, which also belonged to the Petres from the time of Henry VIII., though they had never lived there, as for two centuries

and a half it had been in the occupation of the Catholic family of Mason.

The next place in the bishop's journey was Witham, the seat of the ancient family of Southcote, soon afterwards unfortunately to become extinct. Like the Petres, with whom they were allied by marriage, they were originally of Devonshire stock: like the Petres again, the ancestor to whom they owed their fortune had held office under Elizabeth, and yet had maintained and handed on to their descendants the Catholic faith. This was John Southcote, a lawyer, who became a serjeant-at-law in the first year of Elizabeth and subsequently a judge, first of Common Pleas and then of King's Bench.<sup>1</sup> He would probably have been made Lord Chief Justice of England but for the fact that he was considered too much ruled by his wife, which caused Queen Elizabeth to decline appointing him, on the ground that "she should govern too like a woman if she suffered a woman to be Chief Justice of England". Notwithstanding his judicial appointment, Justice Southcote was known to be a favourer of the old religion, and his name is mentioned in State Papers as a favourer of Papists, while his son John was frequently reported as consorting with priests. At length in 1584 the judge's religious convictions led to his throwing up his office in the dramatic manner narrated by his descendant: "being in his circuit and on the bench at Norwich, a priest happened to be tried for his life; which being the first time that anything of this kind had come before him, one may easily imagine he had no small conflict within himself; but to the great glory of God, he behaved himself with so much courage upon this occasion, that when he perceived he could not save the man's life by giving a favourable charge to the jury, rather than give the sentence of death against him, he stood up in the open court and pulled off his robes of Judge, declaring that he there resigned his office rather than he would bring upon himself and family the guilt of innocent blood". He thereupon retired to the manor of Alberly at Merstham in Surrey, where he ended his life, though he lies buried at Witham.

The descendants of such a man were worthy of him. His son John obtained immunity from persecution by paying £10,000 to the king, and he used to say that the king was

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of Sir Edward Southcote*; Morris, *Troubles*, i., pp. 383 sqq.

never the richer, and he thought himself never the poorer, this sum being paid on so good an account. Both he and his descendants for the next three generations continued to live at Merstham, though Witham remained the burial-place of the family. The house there had been wrecked by the Parliamentarians, after the surrender of Colchester in 1642, "who left neither lock, latch nor bolt upon any of the doors," writes Sir Edward, "nor a whole pane of glass in the windows, and also destroyed all the old writings that were evidences of this estate and (it) was not in a much better condition the first time I came with my father to Witham, he having only glazed two or three lodging-rooms and the parlour where he dined, the rest appearing like a skeleton".

When Sir Edward himself inherited the estate in 1682 or the following year, he left Merstham in disgust at being refused permission to bury one of the family in the village church, because of their being Catholics. This at least is the local tradition, and, whatever its truth, Sir Edward never returned to Merstham, but restored the mansion at Witham, where he lived for the rest of his long life. At the time of Bishop Challoner's visit he was an old man of eighty-two. One gathers something of the charm of his character and interest of his conversation from the reminiscences which he wrote for his youngest son Philip, and which rank among the freshest and most vivid pieces of autobiography that our Catholic literature can show. Unfortunately, though he had had seven sons no one of them left issue, so that with them the family came to an end. The last survivor was Edward, the Jesuit, who died in 1780.

In 1742 the number of Catholics was sixty, and the chaplain was a secular priest named Buckley, who seems to have consulted Dr. Challoner with regard to a young lady who was deterred from becoming a Catholic by the opposition of her family, for later in the year the bishop wrote the following letter on the matter.<sup>1</sup>

"LONDON, Nov. 4, 1742.

"DEAR SIR,

"Mr. Southcote was with me to-day to acquaint me from you that Mrs. Abigail has not only had the courage to

<sup>1</sup> Oscott MSS. Challoner Collection.

confess to her Parents her faith and resolution ; but also the happiness to suffer something for so good a cause. I hope God Almighty will both comfort and strengthen her, and give her the Grace of Perseverance : and I beg that you will let her have the other part of this letter which I have addressed to her. My Respects to Sir Edward and his Lady. *Oremus pro invicem* I am, Dear Sir,

“ Ever yours in Christ,

“ R.— C.— ”

“ FOR MRS. ABIGAIL.

“ DEAR CHILD,

“ It was with great joy and satisfaction that I heard of your resolution of embracing God's Truth, and the right way of everlasting life : nor was this joy lessen'd when I understood that you had already open'd your mind to your Friends and had suffer'd reproaches and persecutions for the same. Take courage, my Child, *Blessed are they that suffer persecution for Justice' sake.* St. Matt. 5. It was thus the disciples of Christ, and the primitive Christians suffer'd from their worldly Relations ; and this kind of treatment Our Lord foretold us we should meet with ; as he himself was persecuted even unto death, by the Children of this World. Fear not, God will be with you ; and what then can all the world do against you ? *He that loveth father and mother, says he, more than me is not worthy of me :* Resolve then, my Child, to follow the work you have happily begun, and to prefer nothing to Jesus Christ. Be not discouraged with the difficulties, which the Enemy may suggest with regard to the Confession of your pass't Frailties or of the evil thoughts, or other sins, to which unthinking young people are exposed in this dangerous world ; Be thoroughly penitent for all your faults, and perfectly sincere in the confession of them, and it will be a satisfaction to you all your life-time. Once more, my Child, I exhort you to take courage in God, and endeavour to love Him and serve Him with your whole Soul : and He will be your comfort and support in this life and your reward in a happy Eternity. 'Tis the wish and prayer, with my blessing, from, Dear Child,

“ Your affectionate,

“ Humble servant in Christ,

“ R. CHALLONER.”



From Witham the bishop returned to Thorndon Hall with its large congregation of 230. The building then existing was a much older building than that which now occupies its site. When twenty years later the infant peer attained his majority and took possession of the accumulations of income, he became noted, not only for his princely charities, but for the magnificent scale on which he lived. Among other undertakings he rebuilt Thorndon Hall on an extensive plan, and many years later, after the passing of the first Relief Act in 1778, he entertained King George III. and Queen Charlotte for two days with the utmost brilliancy. This was, however, in the dim future, and in 1742 it would have seemed the height of folly to suppose that the royal family would within forty years be the guests of any Catholic household.

The Thorndon confirmation was on the 3rd of October. Next day there was another, either at Kelvedon Hall or Downsell Hall, for the three missions which the bishop notes as "Manby Keldon etc." From other entries we learn that Wealside was also included, and the three places counted 130 Catholics between them.

The Manbys were a Lincolnshire family of Catholics who settled in Essex at the Restoration. One of them, Sir Thomas Manby, was knighted and served as High Sheriff of Essex during the reign of James II. when the "dispensing power" had blunted the edge of the penal code for a time, and his son, Francis Manby, was head of the family in 1742.<sup>1</sup>

At Kelvedon Hall lived the Wrights, whose estate for 330 years, and through eight generations, had passed from father to son, every one of whom bore the same name—John Wright. When at length the ninth in succession christened his heir John Francis, the long line was broken, and he himself did not succeed to the estate, but predeceased his father, and though John Francis Wright duly inherited the estate, he left no direct issue but was succeeded on his death in 1868 by his nephew.

Wealside was in possession of another family of the same name, who were for more than a century well-known bankers in Covent Garden.

Though these missions of Downsell Hall and Kelvedon Hall were the last on the bishop's list, there were two others, which

<sup>1</sup> The Manbys are now represented by the family of Colegrave.

he does not mention, but which still existed at the time. The first of these was Bromley Hall, near Colchester, one of the estates of the Mannocks family, of Gifford's Hall, Suffolk. The other was Bellhouse, where the Bellhouse branch of the Petres lived, both being usually served by Jesuits. As the Mannocks, being a Suffolk family, belonged rather to the Midland than to the London District, they call for no special notice here; while of the Petre family enough has already been written.

And now of the whole London District there remained but one county, Hertfordshire, and in that county there was but one mission—Standon Lordship. This manor, which has had a long and interesting line of owners beginning with Stigand, Archbishop of Canterbury, at the time of the Norman Conquest, and ending with the great Duke of Wellington, whose descendants still hold it, was in the reign of Henry VIII. given to Sir Ralph Sadleir, a statesman of much the same stamp as Sir William Petre. The ultimate difference between the two men was that, whereas the latter returned to the faith of his boyhood, Sir Ralph was too thorough-going an Erastian ever to turn from the path which Elizabeth had traced for her subjects. So complete was the regard in which that queen held him, that she not only honoured him with a visit here, but she confided to him for a considerable time the custody of Mary Queen of Scots. Sir Ralph died in 1584, and two generations of Sadleirs succeeded him, following in his steps as members of the Established Church. His daughter, however, had made a love match with Sir Walter Aston, afterwards first Lord Aston, who had become a Catholic when acting as ambassador to the Spanish Court. Thus it happened that, when the last of the male line of Sadleirs died in 1660, the estate passed to Walter, Lord Aston of Forfar, the second baron. Thus from 1660 onward this estate was in Catholic hands, and this fact added to its history incidents such as are common to all the strongholds of the ancient faith.<sup>1</sup> It became associated with martyrs and confessors. The Ven. William Ireland, the martyr, was a guest here, and the house was much spoken of during his trial. At some subsequent time a mob came to plunder

<sup>1</sup> An account of the great state kept up at Standon by the second Lord Aston (1660-78) during the reign of Charles II. was written by his grandson, Sir Edward Southcote, of whom mention has been made, and was published by Father John Morris, S.J., in his *Troubles of Our Catholic Forefathers*, First Series.

the mansion, and the valuables were only saved by being packed in an iron chest and sunk in the river Rib, Lord Aston the while lying hidden in the dove-cot: but on this occasion the mob, having attacked the cellars first, soon rendered itself incapable of doing further damage. In consequence of the Oates plot the fourth Lord Aston suffered four years' imprisonment in the Tower of London, but he was at length released and survived his imprisonment for more than thirty years. He was succeeded in 1714 by the fifth Lord Aston, who like his grandfather lived at Standon in preference to Tixall, and who was still in possession of the title and estates in 1742. He was the brother-in-law of the Duke of Norfolk, having married the duke's sister, Lady Mary Howard, and by the marriage of his son, which had taken place at Standon on the 20th of June, in this very year, he claimed kinship with the Earls of Shrewsbury.

When only a few years later, the bridegroom, having held the title for two short years, died, leaving no son to inherit the estate, Bishop Challoner, then seeking a safe place in which to establish a school, fixed upon this mansion with its chapel and spacious accommodation as suitable for his purpose. In this way the old red-brick towered Tudor house, with its memories of Queen Elizabeth and James I., came to be a Catholic school, and this school lasted on, though not in the same house, at least in the same neighbourhood, and was able to open its doors to the refugees, when during the French Revolution the venerable college at Douay met its end.

If, when the bishop was staying at the Lordship, he had walked up the great drive to the top of the hill facing the house, he would have seen across the valley, along which the high-road from London to Cambridge winds, another hill on which, in days to come, the work of Douay was thus to be carried on for the south of England, and from which priests, trained in the same spirit and tradition in which his own character had been formed, should go out to continue his own work. In that college, which through Douay claimed direct descent from Catholic England, and especially from that Catholic university of Oxford, so intimately bound up with the life of its own patron, St. Edmund, his work for the conversion of England was to be faithfully continued and his own memory was to be ever held in affectionate regard.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### *BRITANNIA SANCTA.*

1743-1745.

HAVING completed the visitation of the district during the autumn of 1742, Dr. Challoner resumed his quiet hard-working life in London. Of the next two years of his life little is known, except that he was engaged in writing one of his more important works, *Britannia Sancta*, which was completed and published in 1745. It was during this period, too, that he was called upon to take a leading part in the difficulties which had arisen between the vicars apostolic and the regulars. These difficulties, which demanded the most careful attention, will be more conveniently described in a later chapter; and are only mentioned in this place because it was at this time that the question came to be one of the bishop's standing troubles.

He was not, however, in the habit of allowing anxiety or worries of any kind whatever to interfere with the quiet tenor of his industrious life. As Bishop Petre continued to reside in the heart of Essex, the administration of the whole district was largely in Dr. Challoner's hands, and the practical work of the episcopate almost entirely so. Moreover, as bishop he continued his practice of always having some literary work on hand, so that his spare time should have constant occupation and various needs of Catholic literature should be gradually supplied. The work on which he was engaged during 1743 and 1744 was particularly congenial to his tastes, and was one to which he returned again and again in different ways. This task was the preservation of the memory of the old English Saints. The Reformation had swept away their shrines and images: the persecution had even blotted out their festivals. With the disuse of the Sarum Missal the feasts of the English

Saints fell into desuetude. The little abbreviated Missals, carried by the priests in persecution days, contained merely the Masses for Sundays, the greater festivals and the common offices of Saints. With the Roman Missal, which the Seminary priests introduced, came the Roman Calendar, and so the names of the old Saints were found no more, except in the unauthorised and non-liturgical calendars prefixed to private manuals of devotion. As we shall presently see, occasional efforts had been made since the Reformation to rescue the names of our national Saints from oblivion, but they had not met with much success. It was in pursuance of this object that Dr. Challoner now conceived the plan of writing short lives of the most celebrated British and Irish Saints, to be published in two volumes under the title *Britannia Sancta*. He was in many ways singularly well qualified for the task. His knowledge of the early sources of British hagiology was very extensive for that age, and the method he adopted was well chosen in face of the disadvantages under which he laboured. It must be borne in mind that there were then no public collections of books to which he could have access. There was no British Museum, nor public library; neither was there much critical apparatus to hand. He was dependent solely on such books as he or his friends chanced to have access to, and the libraries in the great Catholic houses which he visited. Such work as had been already done by Catholics in this field was not always available. Thus, for instance, the lives of the English Saints, written at Lord William Howard's house at Naworth, by the Elizabethan scholar Nicholas Roscarrock, remained in manuscript, and the manuscript had passed out of Catholic hands and lay hidden in the country rectory of Brent-Elleigh in Cambridgeshire.<sup>1</sup>

Another attempt<sup>2</sup> was made by a Benedictine, Dom Jerome Porter, in the time of Charles I., but though the first volume of his book was published at Douay in 1632, the concluding volume never appeared at all. It was prepared for the press

<sup>1</sup> From Brent-Elleigh it was bought with other manuscripts by the University of Cambridge, and was discovered by Mgr. Edmond Nolan, M.A., in the University Library at Cambridge in 1897.

<sup>2</sup> John Wilson's *Martyrologe*, published in 1608, though valuable, is only a list of saints and their festivals.



by Dom Francis Hull, O.S.B., and seems to have totally disappeared.

Of course some of the better-known English Saints were included in the general collection of *Lives of the Saints*, such as that which was translated early in the seventeenth century by Edward Kinsman and his brother, from the Spanish of Villegas. There were several editions of this popular work, which was quite a classic among Catholics, but the English Saints noticed in it are very few. More of them were included in the next collection of any importance to appear in English, *The Lives of the Saints*, published in 1729 by Dr. Charles Umfreville, better known as Fell. But this unfortunate work was denounced in Rome, as unsound, by the President of Douay, Dr. Witham, and so limited was the number of copies sold that it never became well known to Catholics. Even had it done so, however, it would not in any way have answered the purpose which Dr. Challoner's new work was designed to meet.

Inasmuch as his plan involved writing separate accounts of nearly 400 Saints, without reckoning references to a great number of others, who are only briefly enumerated, it will be seen that the work was one of great importance. A very cursory examination of the two large quarto volumes, which he published in 1745, shows the painstaking care which he exercised. As he prefixed to each life the chief authorities from which he had drawn his information, it is easy to estimate the number and value of the sources drawn upon. As usual with his books, it represents a compilation from earlier authorities rather than the results of original research. The latter he was not in a position to undertake, but his object in writing the book did not require it. His work lay in the task of collecting and adapting to his purpose the best available material which was extant.

His two chief sources were the works of Venerable Bede and that great mediæval storehouse of English Saints' lives, the *Nova Legenda Angliæ*—referred to generally as "Capgrave," but now known to be chiefly the work of John of Tynemouth<sup>1</sup> (born c. 1290). So frequent is the use which Dr. Challoner made of this work, and so great is its inherent interest, that it may be well to recall in brief the history of its

<sup>1</sup> See the Clarendon Press edition (1901), with Introduction by Dr. Horstman.

growth and popularity. To begin with, it was the first collection to be made of the lives of English Saints. The idea seems to have been suggested to John of Tynemouth, a monk of St. Alban's, by the *Sanctilogium* of a fourteenth century abbot, Guido de Castris. But there was already in existence the great *Legenda Aurea*, composed by James de Voragine, Archbishop of Genoa, before the end of the thirteenth century. Both these works were devoted to Saints honoured in the universal Church. The work of John of Tynemouth was the making of a similar collection for England alone, so that it is in effect an epitome of the national hagiography. In arrangement it followed the Calendar, and each Saint was commemorated on the day of his local festival.

The work was valued as it deserved, and manuscripts multiplied. As time went on, and it came to be regarded as a species of Dictionary of Saints, the festal order seems to have been considered inconvenient; for, sometime during the fifteenth century, the entire work was rearranged, the lives being placed in alphabetical order. The collection in its new form was, through some unknown reason, attributed to the Augustinian friar, John Capgrave, although he was in no sense the author, but merely the transcriber. The collection passed into its final form when, in 1516, it was printed by Wynkyn de Worde with the addition of several new lives, under the title *Nova Legenda Angliae*. Of its intrinsic value there can be no doubt. The latest editor of the work, Dr. Horstman, after a minute study of the text, comes to the conclusion that the collection exhausts nearly all the materials then known to exist. "The collection is as complete as possible, and the amount of materials brought together by one man is truly astonishing."<sup>1</sup>

On this work, known to him as "Capgrave," Dr. Challoner draws very largely, thus bringing the traditions of the Middle Ages about our national Saints to the knowledge of the Catholics of his own day, and giving his own book a noble ancestry. As he always cites it as Capgrave, he probably regarded it as the work of that author, and whenever he quotes John of Tynemouth by name it is in connection, not with the *Legenda*, but with lives of individual Saints which he obtained from other sources. But whether he knew of the true authorship

<sup>1</sup> *Nova Leg. Angliae*, Oxford, 1901, Introd., xxix.

or not, the fact remains that his book was keeping alive for the Catholics of the eighteenth century the work of the monk from St. Alban's of the fourteenth.

But *Britannia Sancta* is by no means confined to reproducing the *Nova Legenda*, and his other sources of information were very numerous and varied. In most cathedral and collegiate libraries of England mediæval lives of Saints are to be found in manuscripts. Many of the lives relating to Saints who were prelates, had been collected and published by Henry Wharton in his *Anglia Sacra* which appeared in 1691.<sup>1</sup> For all his anti-Catholic bias, that indefatigable student had studied the surviving remains of the old Catholic literature with a devotion which leaves us still in his debt. Even now there are many texts only to be found in his pages; and this collection furnished Bishop Challoner with many of the early lives which otherwise he could not have consulted.

Other biographies of the same nature he found in the colossal *Acta Sanctorum* of the Bollandists, but as this work had only reached the end of July, at that time, this source failed him for the latter half of his work. For the Irish Saints he had recourse to the collection of Father John Colgan, the learned Franciscan of Louvain, whose great work on the Antiquities of Ireland was left incomplete, breaking off with the third volume. Unfortunately only the lives for January, February and March were included in that volume, therefore, for the rest of the year, Dr. Challoner had to fall back on the antiquarian collections of Archbishop Ussher.<sup>2</sup>

From these quarries of learning, and such other collections as Surius, Menard, Harpsfield, Mabillon, as well as early English chronicles such as William of Malmesbury, Brompton, and—one regrets to add—the pseudo-Ingulph, that clever fourteenth century forgery which has deceived so many, he obtained the mass of his material; but many references to less-known sources show both the wideness of his reading in this particular subject and the amount of labour he devoted to it.

The work, which was published in two handsome volumes,

<sup>1</sup> Wharton died in 1695 at the age of thirty-one, having worn himself out by incessant labour—but leaving an almost incredible amount of work done.

<sup>2</sup> Especially the *Britannicarum Ecclesiarum Antiquitates*, Dublin, 1639, 4to; London, 1677, fol.

was on a larger and more expensive scale than his more popular books, and was beyond the means of many Catholics, which will account for the fact that it has never been reprinted. At the present day copies are so rarely to be met with that they command a relatively high price when they are now offered for sale.<sup>1</sup>

It may be that the book was subsequently somewhat overshadowed by the publication in 1756 of Alban Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, which has become one of the classics of post-Reformation Catholic literature; but it must be remembered that in *Britannia Sancta* Dr. Challoner was specialising in one subject—the Saints of the British Isles,—and therefore covers ground which the greater work does not, so that we may well regret that it has not been better known to Catholic readers.

In connection with the publication of Alban Butler's *Lives of the Saints* occurred an incident, which shows the two writers, both so venerated, in consultation about the forthcoming work, and is interesting as showing the terms on which they were. Charles Butler thus describes it in his *Life of Alban Butler*:<sup>2</sup> "At the finishing of his work he [Alban Butler] gave a very edifying instance of humility. The manuscript of the first volume having been submitted to Mr. Challoner, the Vicar Apostolic of the London District, he recommended the omission of all the notes, not excepting that beautiful note which gives an account of the writings of St. John Chrysostom. His motive was, that, by being made less bulky, the work might be made less expensive, and consequently more generally useful. It is easy to suppose what it must have cost our author to consign to oblivion the fruit of so much labour and so many vigils. He obeyed, however, and to this circumstance it is owing that, in the first edition, the notes in question were omitted."

It is fortunate that the effects of this well-meant counsel did not result in the total loss of the notes, which are found in the later editions. Taking this into account we need not regret advice which, though unfortunate in itself, gave us this

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Challoner's own copy is preserved at St. Edmund's College, Old Hall, with a note in the writing of one of his priests, the Rev. Thomas Horabin: "This book is that which the Rev. Dr. Challoner used to peruse himself".

<sup>2</sup> *Works of Charles Butler*, 1817 ed., vol. iii., p. 541.



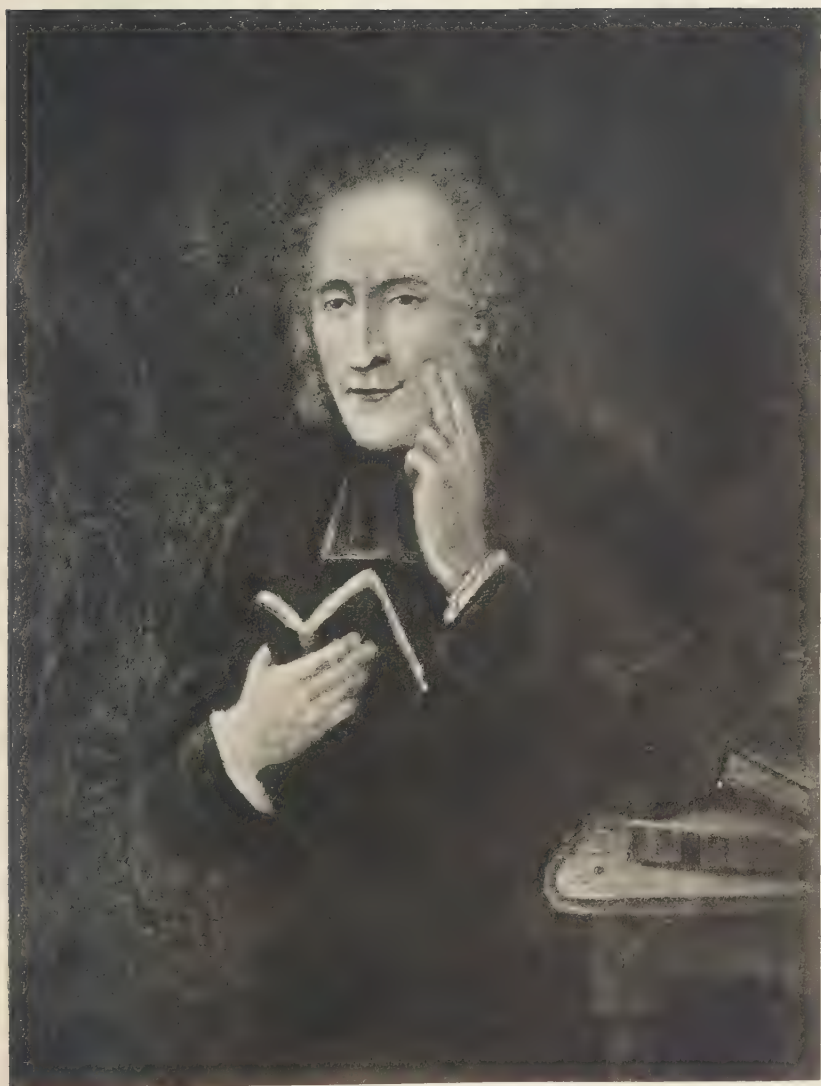
sidelight on a singularly beautiful character. Deference to the wishes of a friend, in such a matter, and for such reasons, could only be possible to a man who lived, not for himself, but with the sole aim of "the gaining souls to Christ". In this spirit of self-sacrifice Alban Butler was a man after Dr. Challoner's own heart.

But the bishop was not content with merely placing before his people the lives of the old English Saints: he desired to restore them to their proper places in the liturgy. As we have already seen, the festivals of the English Saints had through force of circumstances fallen into desuetude. There was now, however, no reason why this loss should not be made good, for the causes which had brought it about were purely accidental. As the Marian priests had gradually died out and their places had been taken by the Seminary priests during the latter part of the seventeenth century, the use of the old Sarum Missal, which could no longer easily be obtained, gave way to the revised Roman Missal of St. Pius V. The founders of Douay celebrated Mass according to the Sarum use in which they had been brought up; but from a very early date the newly ordained priests, who were being sent on the English mission, were taught to celebrate after the Roman rite. Thus in the Douay diary for 1577 there is an entry relating that the new priests said Mass daily from the new Roman Missals, having been carefully instructed by "the venerable priest, Mr. Laurence Webbe, who had himself lived for a time in Rome and learnt thoroughly the practice and ceremonial of that rite".<sup>1</sup>

But the Roman Missal and Breviary only contained the Masses and offices of those Saints whose festivals were observed throughout the universal Church; and it was left to each separate nation to provide its own supplement with its own Calendar of local feasts. The persecuted Church in England, however, at a time when priests were obliged by circumstances to use a portable Missal in which scarcely more than bare essentials found a place, was in no position to provide herself with an English supplement. So in this way it had come to pass that the festivals of the English Saints were no longer observed and their offices and Masses had fallen into disuse.

<sup>1</sup> *First and Second Douay Diaries*, edited by Dr. Knox, Cong. Orat., p. 118.





THE REVEREND ALBAN BUTLER.



It was now Dr. Challoner's aim to obtain from the Holy See the restoration of the English Supplement to the Missal and Breviary. With this end in view he drew up a list of the chief English Saints, and compiled lessons for their offices; and shortly after the publication of *Britannia Sancta* we find both Challoner and Butler writing frequently to the Agent of the English Clergy at Rome on a subject which they both had much at heart.

It is not clear when practical steps were first taken in the matter, but on the 16th of November, 1747, Alban Butler was writing to Laurence Mayes<sup>1</sup> at Rome:—

"This is to inform you Bishop Challoner is very earnest and pressing to have the affair of the offices of the English Saints mentioned by him, finished soon and granted. I sent the lessons some time ago to Paris to be sent to you by the first opportunity; if none happens soon, to be transmitted to the Archbishop of Avignon, directed to Mons. Lercari, Secretary of the Propaganda. I hope one way or other you will soon have them and that you will correct anything in them which may want it and speedily procure the grant for all in England (if you please also in English seminaries abroad) to say them *ad libitum*."

On the 7th of December he writes again to say that the letters have now been sent from Paris to Rome, and he adds: "Bishop Challoner is very desirous they should be despatched as soon as possible".

In the early part of 1748 the application was being considered, for in a letter dated 27th March, Alban Butler writes to Mr. Mayes:—<sup>2</sup>

"I send the citations of the Lessons. They are all in the common Saints' lives everywhere. When the Sarum took out of the Common they are so here, as for S. Wenefrid, 4 Nov. Those in the Sarum are not in the form of the Roman Breviary and sometimes ridiculous almost. I have subjoined the reasons in the Latin paper, which you may get wrote out or part of it, if you think it necessary. They are the reasons suggested to you by word of mouth when I was at Rome. In case any will not do, cannot the common in the Roman be assigned?

<sup>1</sup> Westminster Archives, *Epp. Var.*, xii., 119.

<sup>2</sup> *Epp. Var.*, xii., 129.

In the Benedictine Breviary there are but few, only monks, some inaccurate in history, which had better be corrected. The expenses of the writing them out I will answer for. I beg news how they go on. Bishop Challoner is very pressing and solicitous."

Months passed without any result, and meanwhile Christopher Stonor had arrived in Rome to take over the Agency from Mr. Mayes, who was now in failing health. Once again Alban Butler writes; this time to induce the new agent to press the matter on.<sup>1</sup>

"I sent some lessons in a great hurry by an opportunity from Bishop Challoner to Mons. Lercari for certain offices of English Saints *ad libitum*. I should be glad to know what news about them. Mr. Mayes said they would be granted. I fear they are too long: but I had not time to shorten them and scarce to patch them up, for fear of losing the occasion of sending them. If you be so good as to correct them, or get any thing to be taken out of the common for what may be amiss, I shall be obliged to you very much. The Sarum lessons etc. would not stand on many accounts. I sometimes changed also the Gospels, as those in the Sarum were not in the Missal or Breviary, which would have been very troublesome."

On the same date he also wrote to Mr. Mayes: "I hope you will be so good as to see about or recommend to Mr. Stonor the affair of the offices for Mr. Challoner". Apparently the agent succeeded in getting further inquiry made, but objection was taken to one of the Saints, and Alban Butler, on the supposition that St. Columbanus was the Saint in question, wrote a long letter in defence of his inclusion.

In January, 1749, a decree was issued by the Congregation of Rites, at the instance and through the influence of the Cardinal Duke of York, by which the festival of St. Edmund the King was restored, and the feasts of St. George, St. Augustine, St. Edward, St. Ursula and St. Thomas of Canterbury were raised in rank.<sup>2</sup>

That was far from satisfying the bishop, but it proved much

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Dr. C. Stonor, 28th November, 1748 (Westminster Archives, *Epp. Var.*, xii., 157).

<sup>2</sup> For the text of the decree see *Decreta Quatuor Conciliorum Provincialium Westmonasteriensium*, 1852-73, p. 139.

more difficult to gain a favourable answer to the petition than either he or Alban Butler had supposed, and three years passed without the cause being advanced. Dr. Challoner, however, clung to the project with his accustomed tenacity, and apparently set to work to draft a new set of lessons, for in December, 1752, he writes :—<sup>1</sup>

“I imagine the lessons for the English Saints sent by Mr. Butler are now quite laid aside. If you thought it would be agreeable to our friends in those parts to allow us anything in that nature, I have by me a set of lessons which I have compiled ; which if called for, I will send to you.”

The bishop's original manuscript still exists in the Westminster Archives, and consists of a draft English Supplement, containing Masses and offices or commemoration for nearly seventy Saints, all being taken from the *Commune Sanctorum* except the collects and lessons.<sup>2</sup> A copy was made and sent to Douay in order that the president, Dr. Green, might in due course forward it to Rome. When Bishop Challoner heard that Mgr. Lercari was about to resign his office of secretary to Propaganda, he immediately made another effort, and again wrote to his agent at Rome :—<sup>3</sup>

“As to Mr. Larker [Mgr. Lercari], though I must not be sorry at his promotion, I cannot help being in some concern at his quitting his office, fearing that we shall not meet with his fellow. I should have been glad if the lessons I have prepared for our British Saints could reach his hands, so as to be perused and approved by him, before he leaves his present station ; but that, I fear, will be impracticable. I shall write by this night's post to Dr. Green, in whose hands they are, to send them forward by the first opportunity. Both Mr. Petre of the North and Mr. Hornyold<sup>4</sup> have lately assured me by word of mouth

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Dr. C. Stonor, 14th Dec., 1752, Westminster Archives, *Epp. Var.*, xiii., 59.

<sup>2</sup> Some of the lessons for the offices restored in 1883 were taken from this MS., and thus it happens the lessons in the English Supplement for the feasts of St. Laurence (3rd Feb.), St. Gilbert (6th Feb.), St. Aelphege (19th April), St. Asaph (1st May), St. Augustine (26th May), St. Germanus (30th July), St. Oswald (9th Aug.), St. Ninian (25th Sept.), and St. Theodore (26th Sept.) were written by Bishop Challoner.

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Dr. C. Stonor, 25th Oct., 1753, Westminster Archives, *Epp. Var.*, xiii., 99.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Green was then President of Douay ; Mr. Petre and Mr. Hornyold were Vicars Apostolic of the Northern and Midland Districts respectively.



that they are very much for them : and it is thought an unprecedented case that we should be debarred from keeping the offices of so many illustrious Saints of our own nation, of whose suffrages we stand so much in need, and who, for so many centuries, were honoured by our ancestors, when almost every diocese throughout the Church of God celebrates the festivals of their own Saints. As to the grant made in 1749 it only added one Saint (St. Edmund) to those we celebrated before and gave octaves to some others ; but this falls far short of our call and leaves so many great and glorious Saints in oblivion."

Three weeks later he adds a postscript to another letter :<sup>1</sup> "The lessons &c. will be with you before this reaches your hands. I hope they will pass."

But with the exception of the festival of Venerable Bede restored by decree dated 2nd January, 1754,<sup>2</sup> nothing was done, and two years later he ends a long letter on other subjects by asking :<sup>3</sup> "Are we quite to give up the offices of our English Saints?" While in 1756, he again writes a postscript : "I hope you don't forget the lessons of our Saints".<sup>4</sup> But his patient insistence was to be disappointed for many years, and it was not until 1774 that he at length obtained the privilege he had so long desired and worked for. In that year, as will be seen in a later chapter, Pope Clement XIV. acceded to a new petition of the vicars apostolic, and restored the festivals of twenty-two English saints to our Calendar.

Besides the writing of *Britannia Sancta*, there is but little to record of his life during the years 1743 and 1744. Early in the former year he made a journey abroad, of which nothing is known except that he paid visits to Douay and Dunkirk. Of these visits we learn in haphazard way from separate sources, which, however, tell us nothing of the scope and object of his journey. The Douay diaries record that he arrived at the college in April, 1743, accompanied by a priest named

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Dr. C. Stonor, 15th Nov., 1753, Westminster Archives, *Epp. Var.*, xiii., 102.

<sup>2</sup> See *Decreta Quatuor Concil. Prov. Westmonast.*, p. 139.

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Dr. C. Stonor, 17th July, 1755, Westminster Archives, *Epp. Var.*, xiii., 116.

<sup>4</sup> Letter to same, August, 1756, *Epp. Var.*, xiii., 120.

Smith, and that on the last day of that month he gave confirmation in the college chapel. No other details are preserved, but it is interesting to know that as bishop he trod once more the familiar galleries and offered Mass in the chapel which had for him so many memories.

Of his visit to Dunkirk we are informed by a manuscript at St. Edmund's College, written more than sixty years later at the dictation of Sister Elizabeth Clare Smith, who was a Poor Clare, then at Scorton in Yorkshire, and who had been a member of the Dunkirk community. When Dr. Challoner visited the convent there, Sister Clare was a school-girl, who had been sent to finish her education with the Poor Clares. She had entered the school as a Protestant, but was converted, and had been received into the Church by Alban Butler, then a young priest not long ordained. In the narrative of her conversion, given in the manuscript just mentioned, Sister Clare says: "Soon after, some remarkable event happened of persecution and troubles in England, which brought Bishop Challoner to Dunkirk, and he lodged at our convent. During his stay he gave confirmation to ye young ladies, I also had the same happiness; and now I was fitted out for trials and combats which I was soon to experience."

It would be most interesting to know what was the nature of the "persecution and troubles in England" here referred to, but no information is forthcoming on this point. We do not even know how long Bishop Challoner was absent from England or whether he visited other places besides Douay and Dunkirk.<sup>1</sup>

At a later date Sister Clare met the bishop again, when her own "trials and combats" had begun. On her father's death her mother recalled her to England, and she lived in London for six months with some friends. During this time she used to go to the bishop for spiritual guidance, but

<sup>1</sup> In connection with this journey it may not be altogether irrelevant to raise the question: Was Bishop Challoner ever in Rome? So far as the writer knows, there is no allusion to any such visit in any of his letters or papers; but there is a letter in the Oscott Archives written by Bishop Stonor to Dr. Hornyold in which he asks: "Is Turner the same as was with Bp. Challoner at Hilton?" Hilton was the code word used by Catholics to designate Rome. This letter is dated 26th August, 1753. It is the only suggestion I have ever met with of the bishop ever having been in Rome.

when her mother returned, she was taken to the country where she had no opportunity of practising her religion at all for a year. At the end of that time she returned to London, and as it was the bishop himself who came to her assistance at a critical moment, it will not be out of place to give Sister Clare's own account of her intercourse with him.

"Some time after this event, I went up to London with a gentleman and his daughter, friends of my mother, upon a visit at their house in town, which I was very glad of, as I got the opportunity of seeing once more my honoured and valuable friend, the Right Rev. Doctor and Bishop Chaloner. What I felt of comfort and satisfaction! once more to attain to the informing of him of what I had undergone during these twelve months, absent from his wise counsel and direction, or any spiritual comfort whatever. He set me *all right*, and I had the happiness to approach as often as was proper in my situation; and when for reasons of the times that he was obliged sometimes to abscond, he gave me orders where to go. I got also to Mass by being a little industrious, and rising early. O what a change was this for me! I felt more than I can express, either with tongue or pen: only God can tell what I now enjoyed. But this gentleman now begins to talk of returning to Portsmouth, and according to his promise to my mother, I was to return with him. As I was revolving this all in my mind, thoughtless must I be indeed to go back to my mother. I said to myself, do I not see what danger I am now plunging myself into? No! I cannot go, I will not; I would rather beg my bread from door to door. In short, I took a firm resolution never to return to her upon any account whatever. This resolution taken, I set off and got to the holy Bishop, and then I told him the gentleman was going to return to Portsmouth I had been all this time with; 'but, my Lord, I am resolved never to return to my mother'. Upon which the holy Bishop looked up with his angelic countenance at me: 'Child! Child!' said he, 'what will you?' I answered: 'I will go to service,' at which he shook his head. 'My Lord,' said I, in a great hurry, 'I can make a bed and sweep a room.' Then I entreated him to provide me some asylum, where I might abscond immediately; which, as soon as he could, he did. Meanwhile I wrote a letter to ye good gentleman with

whom I had been so long, thanked him in a proper manner for all his civilities and the rest ; but as my mother and I could not agree upon matters of religion, I resolved not to return to her, but provide for myself ; so begged he would not be anxious about me, and that he would accept of my grateful acknowledgment, and excuse me for absconding from his house, as I presumed on his goodness and kindness already so kindly bestowed on me, and accept of the real reason, which I chose to give with my pen.

“After this I returned to my true and only friend, our holy Bishop, and he gave me directions where I was to go. I then returned to ye gentleman’s house, and made up a good packet of my clothes, which I conveyed out of the house under my hoop ; then I proceeded to ye lodgings of the good woman, his Lordship directed me to. As soon as I arrived, I asked her if she had been acquainted of a young creature who was waiting for service, who was to come and lodge with her ? she said yes ; but she said I could not lodge with her, indeed, supposing I should want the barber to curl and frize my hair, and such-like people to attend me : upon which however I was cast down at first. I resumed my spirits, and animated my courage, and answered her. ‘This is the place I am to wait in, by orders of my Lord B. Chaloner, till Divine Providence shall provide for me.’”

Finally she obtained a situation as nursery-maid in the household of Michael Blount at Mapledurham where she spent four years, her family refusing to give her the fortune of £5,000 to which she was entitled. But she had long felt a vocation to the religious life, and through the interest of Mr. Blount she was enabled to enter the Convent of the Poor Clares at Dunkirk in which she had been brought up. She lived to see the ruin of the convent during the French Revolution, and to return to England, where she died in the convent of her order at Scorton in 1814.

A very similar case to that of Sister Clare Smith is the subject of a letter written by Bishop Challoner, the draft of which in his own handwriting is in the Westminster Archives. It is addressed to the chaplain of one of the English convents abroad, but neither the date nor the name of the priest to whom it was written are mentioned.

“SIR,

“Yours of June 29 desires some further information of me concerning N. N. recommended to your ladies by Miss N. She had her education with the nuns of B. [Bruges or Brussels?] and there became a Catholic, and her amiable dispositions engaged the affections of those good nuns to her, as I learnt from N. N. who knew her there and who first recommended her to me: as she has no Catholic friends nor means of living upon any fortune of her own; tho’ she is very virtuous, her youth, beauty, innocent good nature and want of knowledge of the snares and delusions of this wicked world would expose her to evident danger of making a shipwreck of her virtue, or religion, or both, if she were to be turned out to the wide ocean of the world: for which reason I have hitherto kept her at Hammersmith, but as the circumstances of this family will not allow the keeping her any longer here, I was glad to learn from you that there is so fair a prospect of her being received into the secure harbour of religion in your community. As to her age she is about 21, healthy as to her constitution and as to her voice very well qualified for choir duties: the only difficulty will be, as I apprehend, in raising the sum of money you mention. As to the rest I think it will be a great charity to admit her, for which I hope by God’s blessing your community will be not the poorer.”



## CHAPTER XV.

### THE JACOBITE RISING.

1745.

LIKE all Catholics Bishop Challoner could not but be deeply interested in the recrudescence of Jacobite activity which arose in consequence of the political events of 1743 and which culminated in the attempted invasion of 1744 and the actual rising of 1745. The hopes of many ran high in these years, and the history of the '45 shows that the Stuarts came within measurable distance at least of regaining the throne. Had they done so the position of Catholics would doubtless have immediately been changed for the better, even though their disabilities might not have been removed at one sweep. But on the other hand, judged beforehand, the failure of any Jacobite rising was only too likely to be followed by severe reprisals against Catholics as such, apart from their personal political leanings. It was impossible, therefore, for any Catholic, whether he gave his allegiance to King George II. or King James III., to be indifferent to events which threatened a change of dynasty.

In 1743 political causes which affected all Europe and involved most of the principal Powers in the War of the Austrian Succession (1743-48), gave the Stuarts a sudden and unlooked-for opportunity of making yet another attempt to regain the throne of Great Britain. In this war England, backed by Holland, took up the cause of Maria Theresa, the young Queen of Hungary, who found her succession to all the Austrian dominions of her father, the Emperor Charles VI., opposed by a formidable coalition of Prussia, France, Spain and Bavaria. The action of England in this matter was largely due to Carteret, whose brilliant but futile talents gave him the leading influence in the second-rate ministry of Lord Wilmington. The

king liked him because he could speak German ; while his colleagues realised the value of his wide acquaintance with foreign affairs. The leading point of his doctrine was hostility to France, his present idea being to fight her openly, to assist the Austrians in every way and to send the greater part of our army on active service. Moreover, apart from the general doctrine of the balance of power, from the point of view of Hanover there was grave reason to be apprehensive of the growing strength of Prussia under Frederick II.

The king, delighted with this policy, placed himself at the head of his troops, both English and Hanoverian, and on the 27th of July, 1743, he defeated the French in overwhelming numbers at the battle of Dettingen. The ultimate results of this victory, which did not at first sight appear considerable in itself, were astonishing. The French army withdrew beyond the Rhine, and henceforth the war was confined to the Austrian Netherlands. More far-reaching even than this was the sudden turn which it gave to French policy. The French minister, Cardinal Tencin, anxious to avenge the defeat, determined to divert the English forces from the continental war by a direct attack on England. His plan was to organise an invasion of England under the generalship of Maurice de Saxe. As a purely French expedition would simply have had the effect of uniting England into one national resistance, the Cardinal seized on the idea of joining it to a Jacobite expedition, which might ensure considerable support among Englishmen both at home and abroad, and in itself be the cause of internal divisions and dissensions in all parts of the country. As it is expressed in a curious contemporary work,<sup>1</sup> France "resolved to try the old method for turning the points of our swords against our own breasts. To facilitate this scheme the unhappy house of Stuart lay ready. The young *Ascanius* [Charles Edward], being sent for from Italy, was given to understand that if he would renew his family pretensions to, and venture his life for, the British Crown, he should not want assistance. . . . Accord-

<sup>1</sup> *Ascanius, or the young Adventurer; a True History translated from a Manuscript privately handed about at the Court of Versailles, containing a particular account of all that happened to a certain Person during his wanderings in the North etc.*, London, 1746. Another and quite different book on the same subject and with the same title, though a different sub-title, was a popular chap-book during the eighteenth century and was reprinted in very many editions.

ingly a correspondence was settled with such persons of consequence as still thought themselves obliged to follow the fortune of the House of Stuart, and with all British exiles, who were become such by their inviolable attachment to that family."

The number of such persons of consequence among Catholics must have been considerable, and we are told that the activity of the Jacobite committees, both in England and Scotland, was great. But it does not seem that any great number of Catholics were inclined to give actual help; and, as we shall see from Dr. Challoner's action when the rebellion was actually in progress, he was personally very averse to the whole movement. The matter must have been to him a constant anxiety, especially as the strength of the Jacobite cause appeared to grow. On the one hand, there was in England no very strong personal loyalty to George II.; while on the other, there was widespread discontent with the Government, owing to the heavy taxation caused by the continental war. Moreover, the greater part of the fighting force of the nation was engaged abroad, and, above all, there was now to hand a leader gifted with many qualities that promised success.

The personal popularity and charm of the young prince, Charles Edward, were very important factors in the situation, especially as the cause had suffered in times past through the lack of these qualities in James III. The followers of that prince had not forgotten the depressing effect of his presence in the 1715 rising, or his subsequent lethargy in all attempts projected in succeeding years, while his conduct towards his wife had alienated from him the sympathies of many who would otherwise have given him loyal support.

None of these disadvantages attached to his son, Charles Edward, who was at this juncture encouraged by France to make yet one more attempt on his grandfather's lost kingdoms. From boyhood he had shown all the qualities of a good soldier, and his fine presence and gracious manner caused him to be received with enthusiasm wherever he went in his wanderings through Italy. With the memory of what became almost a triumphal tour remaining in his mind, his sanguine nature led him to expect a still warmer welcome from his own countrymen. He accepted the invitation of the French Court with delight and hastened to throw himself into the prepara-

tions. His parting from his father was characteristic of both men; he himself was already assured of success, whereas James was despondent and apprehensive. "I go, Sire," the prince exclaimed, "in search of three crowns which I doubt not but to have the honour and happiness of laying at your Majesty's feet. If I fail in the attempt your next sight of me shall be in my coffin." To which James could only sadly reply: "Be careful, my dear boy, for I would not lose you for all the crowns in the world".

Meanwhile preparations in France were being pushed on in the most vigorous way. An army of 15,000 men was assembled ready for embarkation at Dunkirk, where storeships and transports with everything needful for the invasion were already collected.

When these things became known in London the immediate effect was a sudden and widespread manifestation of loyalty to King George. The City merchants headed by the Lord Mayor, the Anglican clergy led by the Bishop of London, the Nonconformists of the City and Westminster sent in addresses to the king assuring him of their absolute loyalty.

Such assurances were not altogether superfluous, for the situation was grave. It was calculated that, owing to the absence of so large a part of the army, not more than 8,000 effective men were available, and the Channel was badly guarded. "We have three ships in the Downs," wrote Horace Walpole to his frequent correspondent, Sir Horace Mann, on the 16th of February, "but they cannot prevent a landing which will probably be in Essex or Suffolk. Don't be surprised if you hear this crown is fought for on land. As yet there is no rising; but we must expect it on the first descent."

It was this last possibility that made the situation one of imminent danger. Had Charles Edward landed with his 15,000 men, and been supported by local risings in various parts of the country, civil war would have raged from one end of the land to the other. But as the days went on this danger diminished. On the 23rd of February Horace Walpole wrote: "The young Pretender is at Calais and the Count de Saxe is to command the embarkation. Hitherto the spirit of the nation is with us." A few days later he is reassured completely and states, "There are no signs of any rising".

The situation during these days of public excitement must have been full of difficulty for the bishop, whose responsible position, as well as personal influence, made him the counsellor of his flock, especially of those Catholic "Persons of Consequence" to whom the Jacobites more particularly looked. There seems little room for doubt that at that time he personally regarded James as his lawful sovereign, though he acknowledged George II. as king *de facto*. At any rate many years later than this, in a memorial presented by his Roman agent, on official matters, James is assured of his "inviolable fidelity and singular affection towards your Majesty and Your Royal Family".<sup>1</sup> It would, of course, be quite consistent for him to hold loyally in theory to his allegiance to the Stuarts, and yet to object to the country being restored to them at the point of the sword. His peaceful nature shrank from violence in any form, and despite his Jacobite sympathies he was probably relieved in mind when the news came of the sudden collapse of the projected invasion. A great storm of wind on the 25th of February destroyed several of the French transports, and all the troops actually ready to sail from Dunkirk were obliged to disembark again. The entire expedition was thrown into disorder and ended in a fiasco. News of this new deliverance by the powers of nature reached London a week later, and men everywhere recalled the destruction of the Spanish Armada and the inscription on Elizabeth's medal, *Flavit vento et dissipati sunt*. At any rate for the present there remained no immediate fear of attack, though gloomy forebodings were indulged in as to the events of the near future.

The failure of the expedition led to the downfall of Cardinal Tencin and to a change in French policy. The Low Countries became the seat of war and the plans against England were given up. This was a bitter disappointment to Prince Charles, and as soon as he realised that no further assistance was forthcoming from France, he resolved to make his own attempt unaided. It was a forlorn hope so magnificent in its audacity that it reads like romance rather than history. With seven followers he set out to conquer three kingdoms. His little store of arms, purchased from his own resources, was carried by

<sup>1</sup> *Memoriale presentato al Re*, 1759, Stonor's Roman Agency, Southwark Diocesan Archives, pp. 7-8.



the French man-of-war which acted as the convoy for his own vessel; but even this slight provision was lost, the man-of-war being intercepted by Brett in the English Channel. With his seven followers Charles landed at Moidart on the 25th of July, 1745. We are not concerned to trace here the history of the rising, and it will be sufficient to outline the main features of his astonishing progress. Within two months he had raised an army of 3,000 men, had defeated an English army at Prestonpans and entered Edinburgh. Practically he had gained possession of all Scotland. On the last day of October he left Edinburgh with the purpose of advancing into England. On the 14th of November he took Carlisle; he entered Preston on the 27th and Manchester on the following day.

The news of the defeat of the English army at Prestonpans caused the greatest excitement in London, and from the first arrival of the news, Catholics were put in a most difficult position, being regarded on all sides with suspicion and covert hostility. Horace Walpole on receipt of the news wrote to his friend at Florence:<sup>1</sup> "I can't doubt but the joy of the Jacobites has reached Florence before this letter. Your two or three Irish priests, I forget their names, will have set out to take possession of Abbey-lands here. I feel for what you will feel, and for the insulting things that will be said to you upon the battle we have lost in Scotland; but all this is nothing to what it prefaces. The express came hither on Tuesday morning, but the Papists knew it on Sunday night."

Certainly at Douay the sympathies of the English college were with Prince Charles Edward. Dr. Thornburgh, the president, writing on the 29th of October, 1745, says:<sup>2</sup> "Our news from Scotland has hitherto been very good, and we are in great hopes, and pray daily that Heaven may prosper the just army of our glorious Prince, whose praises are in everybody's mouth. Besides our daily prayers for his success, we sing a solemn High Mass at least once every week for the same intention."

In London all Catholics were believed to be in league with the Highlanders. Even the Duke and Duchess of Norfolk were suspected of Jacobite leanings, notwithstanding the fact

<sup>1</sup> September 27th, 1745.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Rev. Laurence Mayes, Westminster Archives, *Epistolæ Variorum*, xii., 75.



MARY, DUCHESS OF NORFOLK.



that they were on such intimate terms with the Prince of Wales, that when George II., in one of the quarrels frequent in the royal family, refused to allow the Prince and Princess of Wales to remain at St. James's Palace, they took refuge at Norfolk House, where their son George, afterwards King George III., was born. The Duke of Richmond, on the point of starting to join the English army, considered that his duchess would be compromised by staying with the Duchess of Norfolk during his absence as she proposed. In vain the Duchess of Norfolk wrote protesting that so far from being a partizan of the Jacobites, she prayed God "that this wicked rebellion may be soon suppressed, lest it hurt the poor Roman Catholics". Her letter did not allay his Grace of Richmond's distrust and he did not allow the visit to take place.

The Duchess of Norfolk's fear that the rising would prove to the injury of Catholics represented Bishop Challoner's own views. His naturally cautious disposition would realise the chances and consequences of failure more vividly than the possibility and results of success, and he dreaded the outcome accordingly. Dr. Milner, describing the bishop's conduct in this crisis, after having pointed out how very few Catholics as a matter of fact were implicated in the rising, continues:—

"It is true that some Catholics of the northern counties were found in the invading army, and a very few in the South were inclined to rush upon the same inevitable ruin, though it is equally certain that the most learned and pious divines, whom the body afforded, and our prelate [Dr. Challoner] in particular endeavoured to dissuade them from the attempt. One respectable gentleman, in particular, now deceased, but who at the time we are speaking of, was in the flower of his age, had prepared a considerable number of his tenants to march with him towards Scotland, when our prelate, having obtained private information of the design, found means to confer with him, and used such powerful arguments as induced him, at once, entirely to drop it."<sup>1</sup>

The name of the Catholic whom Dr. Challoner thus dissuaded from joining the rising does not appear. Probably he was only one among others whom the bishop influenced in the same way; but all his efforts and the utmost caution on the

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Dr. Challoner*, p. 17.

part of his flock could not allay the suspicions of the public. Horace Walpole, who is always a safe guide where the gossip of the day, apart from the real facts, is concerned, bears frequent witness in his letters at this time to the general distrust of the Catholics. Writing about the news from Newcastle, he tells Mann: "They have taken an agent there going with large contributions from the Roman Catholics, who have pretended to be so quiet".<sup>1</sup>

From another letter we learn that the most outrageous intentions were attributed to Catholics. "At Edinburgh and thereabouts," he wrote on 21st October, "they (the Jacobites) commit the most horrid barbarities. We last night expected as bad here: information was given of an intended insurrection and massacre by the Papists; all the guards were ordered out, and the Tower shut up at seven."

Sometimes the anti-Catholic apprehensions of the public were still more grotesque:<sup>2</sup> "We have another very disagreeable affair, that may have fatal consequences: there rages a murrain among the cows; we dare not eat milk, butter, beef, nor anything from that species. Unless there is snow or frost soon it is likely to spread dreadfully; though hitherto it has not reached many miles from London. At first it was imagined that the Papists had poisoned the pools; but the physicians have pronounced it infectious and brought from abroad."

In more humorous vein was the curious advertisement designed to stir up the butchers: "To all Jolly Butchers. My bold hearts; The Papists eat no *meat* on Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays, nor during Lent, Your friend, John Steel."

Walpole was rather amused at the humour of this, but he adduces it as showing the popular spirit. Occasionally he mentions an arrest: "a piece of a plot has been discovered in Dorsetshire, and one Mr. Weld taken up".<sup>3</sup> This was Mr. Edward Weld of Lulworth, who was however speedily released. "A small ship has taken the *Soleil*, privateer from Dunkirk, going to Montrose with twenty French officers, sixty others and the brother of the beheaded Lord Derwentwater and his son."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Sir H. Mann, 29th November, 1745.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 11th October.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 29th November, 1745.



Amid suspicions and rumours such as these, Catholics passed the three anxious months of September, October and November, until December brought with it the news that Prince Charles had reached Derby; and there was only 140 miles of clear road between him and London. The news arrived on Friday, the 6th of December,—“Black Friday,” as it was afterwards called. In case the Duke of Northumberland should fail to intercept the prince at Northampton, there was nothing for it but fighting. For the last time in its history London prepared for battle. The forces were to be massed at Finchley, King George himself taking command of the Guards. The Royal Exchange was turned into a barracks for the Train-bands. Men of all professions came forward as volunteers. The weavers alone offered the king 1,000 men, and the lawyers, under the command of the Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, Sir John Willes, made themselves responsible for military duty at St. James's Palace and for the defence of the royal family in the king's absence.

Side by side with this activity there was considerable panic. There was a run on the Bank of England and ghastly rumours were in circulation. The Highlanders were said to be sharpening their swords at the blacksmiths' shops. It was believed that King George was ready for flight, and that a yacht packed with his valuables lay in the Thames ready to carry him to Hanover. The loyalty of the Ministry itself was not above suspicion. It is said that the Duke of Newcastle considered for twenty-four hours whether it would not be well for him to be the first minister to declare for King James III. The fact was that the situation was so novel that no one knew how to take it. Yet in the midst of the excitement the social life of London appears to have gone on undisturbed, though the indifference of the public, which historians have found so strange, seems to have been more apparent than real.<sup>1</sup> At any rate, it did not strike Walpole, who was on the spot. Even before Black Friday had made the danger imminent, he had written: “There never was so melancholy a town; no kind of public place but the play-houses, and they look as if the rebels had

<sup>1</sup> A vivid account of the strange contrast of excitement and indifference with which the people of London viewed the situation is given by Mr. Justin McCarthy in his *History of the Four Georges*, chap. xxxv.

just driven away the company. Nobody but has some fear for themselves, for their money, or for their friends in the army." <sup>1</sup> After the news from Derby had arrived, he speaks of it as throwing the town into the greatest consternation. Fortunately in the turmoil the Catholics seem to have been overlooked; at least there was no rioting or open violence against them, but the Government issued a proclamation ordering "all known Papists" to leave the capital.

It is not known whether Bishop Challoner considered himself as included in this proclamation, as we are left quite in the dark as to his movements during this period. There is a hiatus in the Westminster Archives so far as public affairs of 1745 are concerned, and no papers directly or indirectly relating to the rising are to be found among them. Catholics by long and bitter experience had learned to be cautious in committing matters of concern to writing, and where there was a likelihood of compromising others with the Government, papers were better destroyed than kept.

The crisis did not last for long. Three days after Black Friday the news of the retreat of the Highlanders was received in London, and the suspense was at once relieved. Disheartened by desertions and disappointed by the failure of the English Jacobites to rise, Charles Edward was induced by his Council of War reluctantly to give orders for the return march to Scotland. All the heart seems to have been crushed out of him by the apathy of his followers in his support. He retired to Scotland, where the final disaster of Culloden Moor put an irrevocable end to all possibility of a restoration of the Stuart dynasty.

So far as Catholics were concerned, their treatment after the failure of the rising justified their worst apprehensions. Dr. Milner says: <sup>2</sup> "Their houses were constantly disturbed by legal visitors, under the pretence of searching for arms, their horses were taken away from them, and above all, their schools and chapels, which in some places had before been winked at, were now everywhere shut up. The most celebrated of the Catholic schools, that were ruined and dissolved at this period, was that of Twyford near Winchester. . . . The Catholics in the adjoining city, as likewise in the metropolis, and in most

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Sir H. Mann, 29th November, 1745.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Dr. Challoner*, p. 16.

parts of the kingdom, could rarely find the means of assisting at the holy mysteries, or at any other part of the church service, though the most obscure and abject places were industriously sought after for this purpose." Even the Embassy chapels were closed, with the single exception of that belonging to Count Haslang, the Bavarian Ambassador.

In this distress we find the bishop again at his post in London, doing all in his power to relieve others, while in such a proscribed and insecure a condition himself. "Of the Catholics," continues Milner, "who had actually joined in this romantic enterprise or who were suspected of an intention to that effect, the prisons soon became full. This afforded full employment to the bishop's zeal and that of his several assistants in attending them and administering to their relief, both corporal and spiritual, though to afford them any considerable help in the former way he was necessarily obliged to have recourse to charity of the most opulent Catholics."<sup>1</sup> Charles Butler, speaking of this same period when "the prisons were crowded with Scottish and English Catholics," states that "many of these were tried for their lives, and those who particularly interested themselves for the relief of any of these victims to mistaken loyalty, became themselves objects of suspicion. Doctor Challoner was then the universal refuge; he obtained for the sufferers spiritual and temporal aid, and did it with a prudence that satisfied government. The purse of Edward, Duke of Norfolk, was open to him, and many other Catholics co-operated with him. The storm was short but it was very severe; and if it produced much misery, it produced heroic deeds both of spiritual and temporal mercy."<sup>2</sup>

With the failure of the '45 the hereditary connection between Catholics and the House of Stuart may be considered to have passed away. It lingered on, indeed, for a time as a sentimental attachment, and certain outward forms of ceremony were still observed. Thus as late as 1759 Bishop Challoner, through his Roman agent, sent official intimation of the death of Bishop Petre, of his own succession as vicar apostolic and his application to Rome for a coadjutor, to the Old Pretender: and in this document James is given full style of royalty and

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Dr. Challoner*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>2</sup> "Life of Dr. Challoner," *Cath. Mag.*, vol. i., pp. 657-58.

assured of the bishop's fidelity. But such loyalty was no more than a respectful remembrance of the past, and had no real political value. Catholics gradually came to consider the House of Brunswick as possessing the crown *de jure* as well as *de facto*, so that in 1778 they were able with clear conscience to take their oath of allegiance to George III. In that year Bishop Challoner himself made explicit declaration of his own view: "I am fully convinced that our Gracious Sovereign, King George III., is by the will of God and our established laws, the rightful King of these realms; and consequently that all our Catholics owe him all honour, subjection and obedience".<sup>1</sup>

It is probable that the sordid tragedy of Charles Edward's later life was not without its effect in alienating sympathy from his cause; but in any event the same result could not have failed to ensue in the end. A younger generation grew up to whom the Stuarts were only a memory, while the House of Hanover represented to them the existing order of things. The failure of this rising was the death-blow to the Stuart cause, and any lingering chance of its revival was crushed in 1748 by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, which closed the War of the Austrian Succession. By this treaty Charles Edward was deprived of his refuge in France, and till his death in 1788 he was practically a wandering fugitive in Italy.

The failure of the rising excited among the English Catholics grave fears of new repressive measures on the part of the Government, and they hastened to forestall the attack by enlisting the sympathy of the Catholic Powers on their behalf and appealing for their intervention. In September, 1746, Dr. Challoner was anxious that the Pope should be informed of the danger, but it was difficult to send a letter direct to Rome. Under the circumstances he addressed the following letter to M. Aimé Berthon, a merchant at Antwerp, desiring him to forward it to a certain M. de la Vacquerie.<sup>2</sup>

"Sept. 12, 1746.

"SIR,

"This is to let you know, that your friends here are very much alarmed with the apprehension of a storm, that

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Rev. Edward Barrett, *Cath. Mag.*, v., 1834, pp. 431-32.

<sup>2</sup> Westminster Archives, *Epp.*, Var., xii., 87.



they are told by knowing people is gathering, and will break and fall upon them at the next meeting of the Parliament. They are the more surprised at this, because they did not expect it, having given no just occasion for it; but on the contrary, having behaved remarkably well in the late troubles. This comes therefore to desire two things of you; the one that by your prayers and those of other servants of God, you would endeavour to prevail with the King of Kings to deliver us; and to change the hearts of our enemies: the other, that you would with all convenient speed (for there is no time to be lost) acquaint Mr. Abraham [the Pope] by the means of Mr. Lawrence [Mayes], or otherwise with the danger that threatens us; that he may make without delay the best interest he can at Vienna, Turin &c. to divert by their mediation here the blow we apprehend. You may also on the same occasion put Mr. Lawrence in mind that our extraordinary faculties are out in this next October.

“Ever yours

“R. WILLARD.<sup>1</sup>

“P.S.—Be pleased to let W. Errington buy himself a Breviary out of my money.”

It is probable that “M. de la Vacquerie” was a code name for some one at Douay College, for not only is there the post-script relating to Mr. Errington, who was then a student there, but the letter itself was forwarded from the English College to Mr. Mayes, the agent at Rome, in a covering letter from the vice-president.<sup>2</sup>

“DOWAY 2, 8<sup>bre</sup> 1746.

“HON<sup>d</sup> SIR,

“I this moment received ye inclosed from Bp. Chaloner, which he signs Willard, ye name he went by here. You see ye terrible apprehension they are in of a storm coming upon them, and we have had something of it in our Gazettes before, so they beg that immediate application be made to His Holiness to prevail upon ye Queen of Hungary etc. to avert ye

<sup>1</sup> This is one of the last occasions on which he uses his Douay name. In London at this time he was usually called Mr. Fisher.

<sup>2</sup> Westminster Archives, *Epp. Var.*, xii., 88.



blow. I hope this may reach Paris to meet ye post for Rome there in time.

“So remain in great haste, H<sup>d</sup> Sir,

“Your most obedient humble servant,

“FR. PETRE.”

On the following day Alban Butler also writes to Mr. Mayes saying :—<sup>1</sup>

“Pray employ Cardinals Lanti, Riviera, Spinelli, Gonzaga etc. and all friends possible with the Pope to press the Queen of Hungary, Kings of Sardinia, and Portugal &c. to use their utmost interest to avert with all speed the storm of next Parliament. Else we are undone totally. They must distinguish between joining the Prince and being Catholics ; else the Queen of Hungary will not stir.”

So apprehensive were the priests at Douay that the vice-president wrote again three days after his first letter confirming the contents and urging that “great and speedy application must be made to his Holiness to avert the blow which will ruin us all”.

But for the time being the Government was content with the execution in London of Lord Derwentwater and other Jacobite peers, and the massacre of Highlanders in Scotland which gained for the Duke of Cumberland the name of “the Butcher”. No legislative consequences followed, though there was a project of enforcing a new oath of fealty on Catholics, on taking which they should be exempted from the double taxes which they were liable to pay. But this scheme came to nothing, and gradually Catholics settled down into the same state in which they had been before the rising, their waning allegiance to the House of Stuart being transferred, slowly and imperceptibly, yet very surely, to the Hanoverian dynasty.

<sup>1</sup> Westminster Archives, *Epp. Var.*, xii., 89.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE DIFFICULTIES BETWEEN THE VICARS APOSTOLIC AND THE REGULARS.

1745-1749.

It would have been much to the interests of the Church if her history had not included the story of such difficulties as those which are the subject of this chapter. Her internal dissensions, whether on a large or small scale, bear the same relation to the evils inflicted on her from without, as diseases do to wounds won in honourable fight. Yet as in the Holy Scriptures the writer of the Acts of the Apostles recorded the differences of the first followers of Christ, so Church history has continued to chronicle the dissensions of subsequent generations of Christians in the large hope that even the memory of her troubles, now dead and gone, may be of service to the Church in her future life. Just as definitions of doctrine have resulted from the broaching of heresy, so concord is often founded on that wider understanding which is arrived at from the study of ancient feuds.

The secular and the regular clergy have each their appointed place in the Church of Christ. The former are indeed essential to her very existence, but the latter are requisite to her fulness of activity. Under normal circumstances the work of the secular priests and of the religious congregations is complementary, and can be carried on in complete harmony, but when circumstances cease to be normal, trouble may easily arise. The fact that each order or congregation in the Church is in a sense a kingdom within a kingdom, alone suffices for possibility of conflict. As the body of secular clergy and each order of regulars has its own vocation, its own sphere of work and its own interests, the complexity of human life renders it in-

evitable that these interests should sometimes clash. By instituting the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars to settle these difficulties the Popes have at once admitted the danger and provided a remedy.<sup>1</sup>

Such conflict had arisen in acute degree during the abnormal state of confusion, caused by the wreck of the ancient hierarchy and overthrow of the Catholic religion, which was the work of Elizabeth. The disastrous quarrel between the Jesuits and the seculars, which broke out during the latter years of her reign, fruitful in scandal and disedification as it was, not only hindered the work of keeping Catholics to their duty, but retarded conversions and the recovery of those who had drifted away. It is difficult to exaggerate the evil effects of this dissension on the great mass of the English nation. When at length the strife passed into ancient history, it was too late to repair the damage that had been done. So long and painful a contest could not but leave traces behind it, and these results showed themselves whenever opposing interests were involved. As time went on, efforts were made to restore ordinary jurisdiction, with the inevitable consequence of raising questions of mutual rights and duties. Thus constitutional points arose which were only settled after lengthy disputes.

It was Bishop Challoner's misfortune to be called on to play a leading part in a prolonged controversy of this kind, and it would not be possible to give a faithful account of his career as a bishop, without describing the incidents in which he was brought into collision with the regular superiors and their subjects. Having a great regard for the religious state, and more particularly for the contemplative orders, he lived on cordial terms with many regulars, and showed them frequent kindnesses. The contest with them so far as he was concerned was on behalf of the rights of the episcopate and not for any personal motive. In his share of the proceedings he acted with moderation, though he held decided views as to the justice of his case. During the struggle, hard things were said and thought by each party, but at this distance of time it should be possible for us to trace the course of events in a spirit of

<sup>1</sup> Since the above passage was written the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars has been replaced by the newly formed Congregation for the Affairs of Religious (*Sapienti consilio*, 29th June, 1908).

broad charity and fairness, and finding in the controversy an instance of a constitutional question being determined after full discussion in a constitutional way. Ultimately the Holy See decided the point. There is no question now as to which side was right. There remains only the story of the contest.

The difficulties that had long existed between the secular clergy and the religious orders, were the direct outcome of the anomalous government of the Church, which had existed in England from the extinction of the ancient hierarchy to the appointment of the vicars apostolic under James II. It becomes necessary, therefore, briefly to recall the varying changes it underwent.

The last of the old bishops in England, Thomas Watson, died a prisoner in 1584, and in the following year, 1585, the last survivor of the hierarchy,—Thomas Goldwell of St. Asaph's,—died at Rome; and for many years after his death Catholics continued without any bishop other than the Supreme Pontiff, though God raised up for them a great leader in the person of Cardinal Allen. But Allen's work lay abroad; and, so far as ecclesiastical government went, English Catholics remained in a state which an old document well describes as "a kind of anarchy".<sup>1</sup> In 1599 the Pope appointed an archpriest, with twelve assistants, to govern the Church as well as the circumstances permitted. The office of archpriest was held by three priests in succession, George Blackwell (1599-1608), George Birket (1608-1614), and William Harrison (1614-1621).

But the need of a bishop made itself felt, and in 1623 the Pope appointed Dr. William Bishop as titular Bishop of Chalcodon and Vicar Apostolic of England. Dr. Bishop only survived his consecration for one year; but during that time, with the advice of Herman Ottemberg, Bishop of Treves, a well-known canonist, he created the chapter as we have already seen, and on his death this body exercised ordinary jurisdiction until the appointment of his successor, Richard Smith, in 1625.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Smith, in his turn, confirmed and approved the chapter; but no formal recognition from Rome seems to have been obtained for it. At his death on the 18th of March,

<sup>1</sup> *Informazione*, Westminster Archives, 1740-45, "Li Vescovi Catholici".

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Smith was only able to continue in England for six years. The last twenty-four years of his life (1631-1655) he spent in exile at Paris.

1655, another change took place, for Alexander VII. declined to appoint another bishop; but knowing of the existence of the chapter, he declared that till another bishop was appointed, the dean and chapter were the proper persons to have jurisdiction. From the year 1655, therefore, until the appointment of a new vicar apostolic thirty years later, the chapter exercised jurisdiction, granting faculties for the administration of the Sacraments,<sup>1</sup> and for other spiritual functions, making reports to Rome on the state of the mission, and carrying on correspondence with the Congregation of Propaganda.<sup>2</sup>

Yet their position remained anomalous, for they were never formally recognised by Rome, nor by the English College at Douay, the president of which continued to issue faculties, as did the rectors of the other pontifical colleges.<sup>3</sup>

At length in the short reign of James II. first one, then two, and finally four, vicars apostolic were appointed; and the four districts into which England was divided for this purpose in 1688 continued to be the ecclesiastical divisions of the country until 1840.

From this brief summary it will be seen that from the end of the sixteenth to the end of the seventeenth century English Catholics had known four different ecclesiastical authorities: archpriests (1599-1621), single vicars apostolic (1623-1655), dean and chapter (1655-1685), and finally vicars apostolic again, one from 1685 to 1688, and four after that date.

With so many changes it will be easily understood that there was large opportunity for vexed questions to arise and misunderstandings to occur. Moreover, conventual or community life was not possible under the circumstances, so that Benedictines, Franciscans and Jesuits were frequently obliged to live in isolated stations, doing the work of secular priests, and only distinguished from their secular brethren by the fact that they owed obedience to their own superiors. The rights and privileges of these various superiors, though jealously guarded, were not always very clearly defined or accurately

<sup>1</sup> *Motives of the Vicars Apostolic*, Archives Eng. Prov. S.J., No. 1, p. viii.

<sup>2</sup> *Informazione*, Westminster Archives, 1740-45.

<sup>3</sup> Yet with the exception of Dr. George Leyburn (1652-1670), the presidents of Douay would seem to have admitted jurisdiction in the chapter, as did the College of Lisbon.



known, so *that* when the vicars apostolic began once more to assert the rights of ordinaries much heart-burning and strong feeling ensued.

The regulars felt that in times past such action had been taken by the earlier vicars apostolic and the chapter, as now appeared to them undesirable in the existing state of the mission, and liable to cause a serious suspicion of Gallican tendencies. The principle they asserted was the right of the Pope as head over the whole Church to send his missionaries anywhere, with faculties from himself. Though this right was limited at the Council of Trent with regard to countries under episcopal hierarchies, they did not consider the limitation as normal for the whole Church. During the persecution the limitation had not been in force, and only the Pope could decide whether its introduction was desirable. The seculars considered that this question had already been decided by the appointment of the four vicars apostolic under James II. But on the other hand, the regulars, remembering that, when similar claims had been put forward by Bishop Smith in earlier times, the decision of the Holy See had been against him, did not regard the appointment of the new vicars apostolic as settling the question. Therefore it was perhaps natural that the reforms promoted by the latter should be jealously regarded by the regular clergy; and though, no doubt, the vicars apostolic were the best witnesses as to whether the English mission was ripe for the introduction of ordinary jurisdiction, yet as their own interests were involved, they were not, in the eyes of the regulars, ideal judges of the matter. Moreover, at that time, men were suspicious of Gallican tendencies; and the principle which the regulars were defending—that the Pope, as head of the Church, might send his missionaries anywhere with faculties from himself—was denied by Gallicans. Therefore, though there was nothing even remotely approaching Gallicanism in the attitude taken up by the bishops, the question involved principles of profound constitutional value.

The chief, and from the nature of the case the most serious, difficulty that arose, was the question of the dependence of the regulars on the vicars apostolic with regard to hearing confessions. It was then, as it is now, the clear teaching of the Church that for the valid administration of the Sacrament of

Penance a twofold power is required by Divine law in the minister, namely, that of order and that of jurisdiction. To forgive sins with the authority of Christ it is not enough to be a priest, but the priest must be empowered by the Church to exercise this special office on those who are entrusted to him by authority. But since the Council of Trent a third requisite is essential for the valid administration of the Sacrament, because the Fathers of Trent, fearing lest sometimes jurisdiction might be acquired by those who were really unfit for hearing confessions, decreed that no priest, even a regular, could hear the confessions of people living in the world, whether priests or lay people, unless he obtained a parochial benefice, or by examination or otherwise were judged by the bishop to be a fit person, and thus obtained approbation.<sup>1</sup> In consequence of this decree secular priests receive jurisdiction and approbation alike from the bishop, but regulars receive jurisdiction from their own superiors, while they have to obtain approbation from the bishop, except as regards confessions of members of their own order.

There was no dispute as to these facts, and in countries where the government of the Church was normal, the position of regulars with regard to local ordinaries was clearly understood and acted upon, but in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, when for long years together there was no bishop, and when the powers of those who were in authority were so ill-defined, the whole question of the approbation of the regulars became a very difficult one. As early as 1627, Bishop Smith made an attempt to deal with it, and alleged that no regular could hear confessions unless approved by him, but in this view he was not supported by Pope Urban VIII., who, in a Declaration in Congregation of the Holy Office,<sup>2</sup> declared that Bishop Smith was not Ordinary in England, but merely delegated by the Holy See without the usual powers of an ordinary, and that missionaries sent from the Holy See were not obliged to receive any approbation from him. The same Pope in 1633 issued a Bull in favour of the Benedictines, which proved of great importance in the subsequent controversy and

<sup>1</sup> Conc. Trid., Sess. XXIII., cap. 15, de Reformatione.

<sup>2</sup> December 16th, 1627. *Motives of the VV. AA.*, iv., Archives Eng. Prov. S.J., No. 1.

was known as the Bull *Plantata*, but it related solely to the Benedictines themselves.<sup>1</sup>

When the vicars apostolic were restored in 1685 and 1688 the question became acute once more. The new bishops felt bound to enforce the ordinary law of the Church as declared in the Council of Trent, whereas many of the regulars considered that they were in every respect exempt from the jurisdiction of the vicars apostolic by reason of the privileges of their orders.

At length, to set the matter at rest, Pope Innocent XII. issued a decree on the 5th of October, 1696, declaring that by the appointment of vicars apostolic made by his predecessor, Innocent XI., all jurisdiction of chapters or vicars capitular, both secular and regular, throughout the kingdom had come to an end, especially that which could in any way have belonged to the Benedictines of the English congregation by virtue of the Bull *Plantata*. Moreover, he decreed that all regulars, including the Society of Jesus and the Benedictines, were subject to the vicars apostolic, both as regards approbation for confessions, and other offices touching the cure of souls and the administration of the Sacraments.<sup>2</sup>

But even this clear pronouncement failed to end the question, and Bishop Giffard had considerable trouble over it throughout his episcopate. At length, after his death, various incidents occurred which reopened the whole question, so that in 1745 a writer is able to say that the divisions "have come to that excess as to make it doubtful whether ye administration of the Sacraments is truly and validly observed".<sup>3</sup>

The first incident that brought matters to a head was the case of Lawrence Lorain, known as Thomas Hall, a Franciscan Recollect,<sup>4</sup> who was stationed at Edgbaston, near Birmingham, in 1731, and who subsequently held many responsible offices in his order. He seems to have been a zealous priest, who apparently allowed his zeal to outrun his discretion.<sup>5</sup> For

<sup>1</sup> See Dodd, *Church History*, iii., 161.

<sup>2</sup> Decree *Alias a particulari*, 5th Oct., 1696. *Bullarium Romanum* (1739), vol. xii., p. 275.

<sup>3</sup> *Motives of the VV. AA., sup. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> See Thaddeus, *Franciscans in England*, p. 268. The incident in question happened in 1735. Father Lorain died in 1783 or 1784.

<sup>5</sup> *Informazione del portamento e sentimenti d'alcuni Missionarii Inglesi circa l'approvazione per le confessioni*, Westminster Archives, 1740-45.

complaint was made that, not content with his own cure of souls, "he made excursions as far as thirty or forty miles into Derbyshire, speaking disadvantageously of the clergy missionaries and gathering up contributions that were designed for them". The matter was brought to the notice of the Vicar Apostolic of the Midland District, Bishop Stonor, who wrote to the Provincial of the Franciscans, desiring him to restrain Mr. Hall's activity and empowering him to curtail his faculties. To this the Provincial, Father Bruno Cantrill, replied that he did not understand the bishop when he talked of suspending Mr. Hall or taking away his faculties, as both these powers belonged to the superiors of the order.

Shortly after, a similar case occurred in the Northern District, and this, too, was due to the unregulated activity of another Recollect Friar, Father Lawrence Robinson, who came to England about the year 1734 and was appointed "Præses" of Hexham in 1737, an office which he held till 1743. Bishop Williams laid formal complaint of his action before Father Joseph Pulton, who had succeeded Father Cantrill as Provincial in 1737. This case was the more striking because the bishop himself was a friar, being a Dominican, and would naturally be in sympathy with the just claims of the regulars. But in this matter he took exactly the same line as the secular Vicar Apostolic of the Midlands had done. As no satisfaction was offered, he, together with the two secular vicars apostolic, Bishop Stonor of the Midlands and Bishop Petre of London, decided to make a joint application to the Papal Nuncio at Brussels. The Provincial of the Friars also laid his side of the case before the Nuncio. His contention was that by reason of the privileges of their order, the Recollect Friars could administer Sacraments, receive faculties and exercise even parochial functions on the authority of their own provincial, without any reference to the vicars apostolic. The fact that in practice they applied to the vicars apostolic for faculties, was explained as a mere act of courtesy and external deference. The whole claim was grounded on the Bull *Plantata* of Urban VIII.

The vicars apostolic based their reply both on canon law and on prudential reasons.<sup>1</sup> On the former ground they

<sup>1</sup> *Observationes in Scriptum Regularium*, Westminster Archives, Papers, 1740-45.

pleaded not only the decrees of the Council of Trent, but the express decree of Innocent XII., by which as we have seen the privileges of the Benedictines under *Plantata* were abrogated. On the latter ground they alleged the confusion into which the English mission would fall if independent authorities were allowed unrestricted freedom of action without the consent or even the knowledge of the vicars apostolic. In support of this they adduced certain definite points in the conduct of the superiors of the regulars to which they took exception.

Ultimately the Congregation of Propaganda decided on the facts of the Hall case in favour of the regulars, declaring that the provincial was justified, and directing Bishop Stonor to renew Mr. Hall's accustomed faculties.<sup>1</sup> The Nuncio at Brussels had also, in a letter to the Provincial of the Franciscans dated the 18th of April, 1738, lent support to their contention, by stating that he was certain of the views of the Holy See in the matter. According to him, although the regulars could not use their faculties without the knowledge of the vicars apostolic, to whom they were bound to show them that they might get approbation, yet this approbation was sufficiently obtained by the mere exhibition of the faculties to the bishop.<sup>2</sup>

This view was speedily promulgated and as speedily controverted, so, in order to obtain a clear understanding, the vicars apostolic, in or about 1739, made a formal demand for definite regulations. With this application they sent an outline of the facts in the cases of Hall and Robinson, with a summary of the correspondence which ensued.<sup>3</sup> The actual rulings asked for were:—

i. That the approbation by the vicars apostolic should be necessary for the validity of the Sacrament to all missionaries whether regulars or seculars, and that, even when given, it might for just causes be withdrawn.

ii. That the Holy See would contradict and even censure the opinion held by the regulars to the effect that the approbation, which they receive from the bishop, is only a simple

<sup>1</sup> The printed summary of the "Case for the Regulars" laid before Benedict XIV. and a special Congregation in 1751, *Facti* and *Summarium*.

<sup>2</sup> *Summarium*, *cit. sup.*, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> *Informazione del portamento e sentimenti*, etc. (*cit. sup.*), together with an Appendix to the same.



intimation of the power and faculties to hear the confessions of lay folk, which power they have received from their own superiors and not from the bishop.

iii. That whereas the regulars all along contended that they sought approbation of the bishop merely out of custom, whilst holding that their faculties for hearing the confessions of lay people were derived not from the bishop, but from their own superiors, and that they neither needed nor wished to use any power received from the bishop, all such statements should be declared incompatible with the decree of Innocent XII., and not to be tolerated.

iv. That the limitation of missionary faculties should be left to the judgment of the vicars apostolic, as often as grave cause should arise, such cause to be explained to the Sacred Congregation.

These are the four points demanded in a formal petition to Propaganda, of which a copy is in the Westminster Archives. The document is undated, but as it is in the name of Bishop Williams as well as those of Bishops Petre and Stonor, it must have been signed before the 3rd of April, 1740, on which day he died. It also appears to have been subsequently amended or replaced by another petition, because in a later document we find three additional points, all of importance: first, that the vicars apostolic shall have power to examine all regulars before allowing them to hear confessions; and next that the vicars apostolic may place such regulars where they think proper; and further, that when one is so placed and is judged to have a sufficient number of Catholics under his care, they may confine him within certain limits, and forbid him to extend his mission, or to administer the Sacraments anywhere else.<sup>1</sup>

The thrashing out of these questions was in full course when Dr. Challoner was consecrated bishop, and the papers in the Westminster Archives show that he had to give his mind to the matter closely during the years which followed.

It was not till 1745 that a decree was obtained. Bishop Williams was dead and had been succeeded by Dr. Dicconson, formerly Vice-President at Douay. There were, therefore, now three secular vicars apostolic besides the Franciscan, Dr.

<sup>1</sup> *Motives of the VV. AA., cit. sup.*

Prichard of the Western District. In many ways Dr. Williams was a great loss, because being a friar himself, his friendly co-operation with the two secular vicars apostolic was the best proof that their action in this matter was not dictated by any animosity or jealousy of the seculars against the regulars; an accusation which many of the regulars and their friends repeatedly alleged. On this point it is worth while to quote a document already cited, *Observationes in Scriptum Regularium*:<sup>1</sup> "Partly untrue and partly irrelevant to this controversy are those things, which are met with, on almost every page, about the dislike and envy felt by the Secular clergy and the Vicars Apostolic for the Regulars. Where many men of different institutes are engaged in the same work of the Gospel, it is not by any means wonderful that some strife and jealousy should arise, since we read that the same thing happened in the first ages of the Church, even among the disciples of our Lord. But the writers of the *Scriptum* will scarcely persuade impartial judges, as they wish to do, that in this England of ours the secular priests are always to blame, but the regulars never, so that the whole secular clergy is inflamed with an incredible dislike and envy, while the regulars on the contrary display the height of goodwill. Christian charity does not allow us so to think of so many men, learned, holy, and daily devoting their life to Christ."

This accusation, which was sincerely believed by some, lent fresh bitterness to the feelings which were evoked, when the decrees of Propaganda and the brief of Benedict XIV. confirming them were at length published, especially as the decision was absolutely in favour of the vicars apostolic. In precise words, all the points for which they had contended were allowed. The regulars of whatever order, including the Society of Jesus, were bound thereafter to receive faculties for administering the Sacrament of Penance, and other offices concerning the cure of souls, from the vicars apostolic in their respective districts; they could be subjected to examination by the vicars, and for lawful causes might be suspended in whole, or in part, from the exercise of such faculties; they might be corrected in morals, and forbidden to leave the Catholics entrusted to their care, or to go beyond the places assigned to them without

<sup>1</sup> Westminster Archives, 1740-45.

special permission. All this, notwithstanding the decree *Plantata*, or any privileges or customs of their order.

These decrees of Propaganda the Pope confirmed by brief dated the 2nd of September, 1745. So disturbed were the times, however, that the decrees did not reach England for a long time, and were not received apparently until early in 1748, nearly three years after they had been made and confirmed. When they were promulgated in August of that year, the vicars apostolic, in their joint pastoral, alluded to, but did not explain, the delay. They speak of the decrees as having been issued nearly three years ago, but on account of the difficulties of the times delivered very tardily into their hands.<sup>1</sup>

When they did reach England, some months elapsed before they could be promulgated. Among other delays one was caused by a letter from Bishop Stonor to Dr. Challoner never reaching its destination, and there were difficulties as to the proper promulgation of the decrees, which could only be arranged by means of lengthy and slow correspondence.

On this latter subject Dr. Challoner wrote at some length to Bishop Stonor:—<sup>2</sup>

“In the meantime I would not delay acknowledging the receipt of yours and communicating to your Lordship some of my thoughts upon the subject.

“1. I applaud very much your system of promulgating the Decree and that in the most effectual manner which our circumstances will allow of.

“2. But apprehend you will never prevail with some people to be hearty in publishing a decree given against themselves; much less to transcribe and send copies of it to all their subjects.

“3. The system of obliging them to take out written or printed faculties, annexed to a printed copy of the Decree, would more effectually promulge it among them and perpetuate the memory of it.

“4. The common letter should be so worded, as to insist upon nothing more than what the decree clearly contains;

<sup>1</sup>“Jam a tribus fere annis emissa, sed propter temporum impedimenta tardius ad manus nostras delata,” Pastoral, 23rd August, 1748, Westminster Archives, 1745-49.

<sup>2</sup>June 4th, 1748.

lest otherwise it raise new contentions instead of allaying the old.

"5. If possible Bishop Prichard should be induced to sign it. In order to this, copies should be transcribed here for each one of the Bishops, and that for Bishop Prichard sent to him by Mr. Berington, with a sketch of the common letter, and a signification of our desire of his joining in it. I have not any copy of the sketch you mention. I think a more perfect one might be drawn up out of your Lordship's letter, which, when agreed upon by you, Mr. White<sup>1</sup> and Mr. Eaton,<sup>2</sup> I will, if you desire it, dress up in Latin.

"6. As to a notary public I should think that if one of us should testify by hand and seal a *congruit cum originali*, this should be abundantly sufficient. I have seen a copy of the former decree thus authenticated by Bishop Smith. Excuse these indigested thoughts drawn up in haste."

Apparently Bishop Prichard could not be induced to sign the joint promulgation, for when it was published on the 23rd of August it appeared in the names of Bishops Stonor, Petre and Dicconson. It is a moderate document, conciliatory though firm in tone, and quite clear in tenor. Having announced the arrival of the decrees, it formally communicates the authenticated copies sent with the pastoral, and desires the superiors of the clergy, both secular and regular, to communicate them in turn to all their subjects. "When this has been done, it will be very pleasing to us to hear it as soon as possible, so that we may both rejoice in the Lord because of your ready devotion and obedience to the Holy See, and also inform the Holy Father of the same as soon as may be."

That nothing on their part might be wanting for the perpetual observance of the decrees, and that every one, putting aside all contentions, might labour in the common cause in full harmony, the vicars apostolic announced that thereafter they would either in person or through their vicars general grant all necessary faculties *in writing* to which a summary of the Apostolic decrees would be annexed. They further declared that according to the tenor of the Pope's brief it would not be lawful for any one to exercise any faculties in their dis-

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Petre.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Dicconson.

tricts except those received from the bishops, but that they would always be ready, not only to give suitable faculties to those who were fit, but also to grant fuller faculties in all cases in which this might seem advisable for promoting the salvation of souls. They then confirmed all existing faculties which they had granted or approved, and they granted moreover that any priest, rightly approved in one district but entering another, should be deemed approved for the latter for the space of one month, and might exercise faculties accordingly, unless expressly forbidden by the local vicar apostolic. After the month had elapsed he was to seek approbation in the usual form. The pastoral concluded with an aspiration that the God of Peace and Charity might be with all. It was dated 23rd August, 1748, and was signed by Bishops Stonor, Petre and Dicconson.

The decrees met with a varied reception. The secular clergy naturally were fully satisfied, but the regulars were divided. The Augustinians gave their full adhesion to the decrees at once; the Jesuits endeavoured to procure a delay to enable them to receive instructions from Rome; the Franciscans organised a movement for the revocation of the decrees, sending one of their number to Rome for that purpose, and in this line of action the Benedictines and Carmelites concurred.

Glimpses of the progress of these various trends of opinion are to be found in the correspondence between Bishops Stonor and Challoner during the autumn of 1748. From this correspondence it is clear that Bishop Petre had already largely withdrawn from an active part in public affairs, and that Dr. Challoner was taking the lead in London. It was a position he was not anxious for, and he endeavoured to disclaim it, as appears from a passage in one of his letters in which he says:—<sup>1</sup>

“I must beg leave to observe, also, that Mr. White [Bishop Petre] is the person to be addressed to, rather than I, who, during his life, am to be little more than his Vicar, and am ordered to be directed by him and not to direct him. To him I shall, by the first opportunity, impart the contents of yours; and if he does not choose to write himself, shall send you his thoughts in quality of his scribe.”

<sup>1</sup> To Bishop Stonor, 4th June, 1748.



That he occasionally took a line of his own, is, however, clear from the following letter, in which he reports to Bishop Stonor the efforts of the Jesuits to obtain some delay in the carrying out of the decrees.<sup>1</sup> "Mr. Murphy" is Father Cornelius Murphy, then recently arrived in London from Lancashire, a man of note, who had been at the head of the Society in that county, filling the office technically known as "Rector of St. Aloysius' College". He filled the corresponding office in London with the title "Rector of St. Ignatius' College" from 1749 onwards.<sup>2</sup> "Mr. Sheldon" is Father Henry Sheldon,<sup>3</sup> who had been Rector of the English College, Rome, and was Provincial of the English Province from 1744 to 1751 when he returned to his former post. Hilton, of course, is Rome, and "Mr. White" is Bishop Petre. "The King" is James II., and by "his Successor," James Francis, the "Old Pretender," is designated.

"Oct. 15th, 1748.

"HOND. SIR,

"Mr. Murphy, who is Superior of the Padri here in the absence of their Provincial (now beyond the seas) called upon Mr. White, whilst I was in the country, desiring in the name of Mr. Sheldon that we should let matters go on in their old train, till he (Mr. Sheldon) could have an answer from Hilton, how he was to behave. Mr. White, who did not, I believe, perceive the tendency of this proposal, seemed willing to acquiesce to it, but however referred him to me. As soon as I came home, the same gentleman came with the same proposal to me; but I assured him, we had all agreed to conform ourselves to what had been written in the common letter; and we would admit no one upon any other footing than that of asking faculties from us. I plainly perceive these gentlemen are all seeking delays; in order to make what interest they can at Hilton: to put a stop if possible to the execution of the Decree, or to have it explained away; and by a hint which Mr. Murphy gave me, in saying (tho' very falsely) that the Decree in '96 was suspended by the interposition of the then King;

<sup>1</sup> Westminster Archives.

<sup>2</sup> See Foley's *Records*, Collectanea, Part I., p. 533. Father Murphy died in London, 31st October, 1766.

<sup>3</sup> See Foley, *ibid.*, Part II., p. 704. He died in Rome in 1756.

I believe they will apply to his Successor for his interest on this affair, All which I thought necessary to communicate to you ; that we may take our precautions. I am,

“ Hond. Sir,

“ Ever yours,

“ R. C.

“ *P.S.* My address now is  
at Mrs. Hanne's, near Chappel Street,  
in Red Lyon Street, Holborn.”

The idea of enlisting the sympathies of “James III.” reappeared again, but, if tried at all, it seems to have come to nothing. Bishop Stonor,<sup>1</sup> for one, did not apprehend much result from that quarter, for though he admits that it was very likely that “they will try with the Son what they are said to have done with the Father,” he continues, “I don't think the Son (though he should be more inclined to their side, which I believe not), will think it proper for him to meddle in such matters, which it would be looked upon as a grievance for him, who is acknowledged head, to meddle with”.<sup>2</sup>

On the general position, Bishop Stonor warmly approved of Dr. Challoner's course of action, considering that any delay would be used as an argument in favour of a suspension at least, if not a total revocation, of the decrees.

Shortly after this letter to Bishop Stonor, Dr. Challoner thought it necessary to report the position of affairs to the agent at Rome.<sup>3</sup>

“LONDON, *October 20, O.S., 1748.*

“SIR

“We have reason to think the Regulars here are very busy in consulting together upon the means of eluding the late decree ; or procuring, if possible, that the force of it may be explained away. Not a man of them all, besides an Irish Augustinian, has as yet signified his submission to it. Mr. Murphy (who in the absence of Mr. Sheldon now beyond the seas, is here Superior of the Padri) applied lately to us, in

<sup>1</sup> Reply to Dr. Challoner, Westminster Archives, 1745-49.

<sup>2</sup> As a matter of fact the regulars did address letters to the Pretender. See *Cath. Mag.*, 1837, p. 541.

<sup>3</sup> Westminster Archives, *Epp. Var.*, xii., 152.

the name of Mr. Sheldon, to desire we should let matters go on in their old channel till he could have an answer from Hilton [Rome] what measures he was to take. This seemed a very extraordinary proposal after our friends at Hilton had so expressly declared their mind; and, therefore, we answered that we should stick to the decree, and to the measures intimated to them in our common letter, and proceed accordingly. However it appears by this and other instances that these gentlemen are seeking delays; in hopes of making what interest they can in your parts. The same Mr. Murphy affirmed (*very untruly*) that the Decree of Innocent XII. in '96 was suspended at the desire of the then King: which also I have heard advanced by another leading man among the Regulars: this makes us think they may probably try their fortune that way, by applying to his successor, which is the reason we give you the trouble of this, at the suggestion of Br. Stonor (whom I had time to acquaint with the particulars above mentioned) and, as I certainly know, agreeably to the sentiments of Mr. Eaton [Bishop Dicconson]; tho' I had not time to consult him; nor know at this present where to address a letter to him, he having been for some time from home. You will be pleased therefore to take all proper precautions to baffle their plots; and represent these particulars where and how you shall see most proper, in the name of us all. We enjoy at present a perfect calm, God be praised, nor is there any apprehension of trouble from the execution of the decree. Mr. White [Bishop Petre] is much yours. Our compliments to Mr. Stonor and wherever else due. I am,

"Your affectionate humble servant,  
"R. CHALLONER."

In another letter to Bishop Stonor written soon after, Dr. Challoner makes brief allusion to the position of the Augustinians.<sup>1</sup> Having stated his intention of writing a full account of affairs to the Nuncio at Brussels, he adds: "I saw a letter from him [the Nuncio] lately sent to the superior of the Aug[ustinians] (who is under a kind of persecution from the other *frati* for his submission) in which he applauds his proceeding and wishes that others would follow his example".

<sup>1</sup> November 8th, 1748, Westminster Archives, 1745-49.

In the same letter, however, he says of another order which he does not name, but which can be identified with the Dis-calced Carmelites :—

“ We plainly see these gentlemen profess a total independency on any one but the P[o]p[e] himself, and would put themselves at least upon a level with the BB. [bishops] to whom they own no subjection : and, as to all decrees to the contrary, are resolved to look upon them, as in no way concerning them, so long as they are not named, and their immunities are not inserted at large.”

Meanwhile the Benedictines joined the opposition. “ This morning,” he writes on the 10th of November,<sup>1</sup> “ I have received another of the like nature from Mr. Howard, Prov[ost] of the Benedictines] much in the same style and to the same effect. I have not time to have it transcribed ; and I suppose you may have the like. I write by this post to Mr. Crivel to give him an account of all matters.” “ Mr. Crivel ” was Cardinal Crivelli, Prefect of Propaganda ; so that the bishop evidently regarded the situation as serious, now that the Jesuits, Benedictines and Carmelites had raised difficulties.

But the most active opposition came from the Franciscans, who, as we have seen, ultimately sent one of their number, Father Felix Englefield, to Rome.<sup>2</sup> This father was a member of the well-known Catholic family who lived at Wooton Bassett in Wiltshire, and through his influence his brother, Sir Henry Englefield,<sup>3</sup> took up the cause of the regulars. Another influential Catholic, who was active in their behalf, was Sir Henry Bedingfeld of Oxburgh Hall, Norfolk,<sup>4</sup> but these two baronets proved to be the only laymen of any position who joined in the agitation against the decrees.

Though Father Englefield had not as yet been sent to Rome, it must not be supposed that no efforts were being made

<sup>1</sup> To Bishop Stonor, 10th November, 1748, Westminster Archives, 1745-49.

<sup>2</sup> See Thaddeus, *Franciscans in England*, p. 229.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 176.

<sup>4</sup> The Bedingfelds had been settled in East Anglia from the time of the Norman Conquest. Sir Henry's grandfather, having spent a fortune in the cause of the Stuarts, had received a baronetcy from Charles II. at the Restoration in recognition of his loyalty. Sir Henry, who was third baronet, died on the 15th of July, 1760.

by the regulars to influence the authorities there. The vicars apostolic guessed, though they were not certain, that some kind of negotiations were being carried on. They learned full details of the situation early in January, 1749, when they received a letter from Bishop Stonor's nephew, Dr. Christopher Stonor, who had recently succeeded Mr. Laurence Mayes as their agent, and who wrote as follows :—

“Your suspicions of the Regulars' endeavours here were very well grounded : however, they have not succeeded at all in their attempts. For, a few days after I had been with Mr. Larker and communicated to him the contents of your letter, he sent for me, and bid me inform you that circular letters were to be sent immediately to the Generals of the Jesuits, Dominicans, Franciscans and Carmelites ; as likewise to the President of ye English Benedictines, requiring the immediate obedience of their subjects to the late Decree ; acquainting them also, that if they have anything to object against it, they may lay their reasons before the Congregation of the Propaganda, but that in the meanwhile they must obey the order already given.<sup>1</sup> I think this is in reason all we could expect, and, as we know very well they can produce no good reasons for their pretentions, we have no occasion to apprehend that so good an order, once quietly established, will ever be repealed. The suspension of the decree of Innocent XII. is a thing unheard of here, not the least hint of anything like it in the Archives of the Propaganda. The discreet manner in which you behave towards the Regulars in publishing the Decree, granting faculties etc. gave general content here. Mr. Larker, who is our thorough friend, bid me caution you to proceed towards them with the same tenderness and discretion, at least in the beginning, that so they may have no reason to complain. I mention this, because the great cry of the Frati against the Decree was that it would make the Bishops so many tyrants over them. I forgot almost to tell you that Mr. Prichard is to have a gentle reprimand.”

<sup>1</sup> That this order was complied with, we learn from a letter of Bishop Stonor to Mr. Brockholes, 26th February, 1748-49 (Oscott Archives, *Kirk Papers*, vol. i.) : “The affair of the decree goes on very well. In conformity to Mr. Abram's second orders to the several Generals to begin with obeying, after which he will hear what they have to say,—they have now, all, Benedictines, Franciscans, Jesuits, Dominicans and Blyth declared their submission, tho' in a way somewhat awkward.”



mande, for his having had a greater regard to his former brethren than his present dignity.”<sup>1</sup>

Bishop Challoner answered Christopher Stonor's letter on the 23rd of February, 1748-49, by which time he was enabled to report fully as to the manner in which the various orders had given in their adhesion to the decree. He was personally dissatisfied with the terms in which the acceptance was expressed by some of them, and is careful in his letter to quote the very words which the various superiors had used. As the letter is, on this account, both long and technical, and studded with Latin quotations, it seems convenient here only to give a summary, leaving the full text to be seen in the Appendix.<sup>2</sup>

The Dominicans were the first to declare their submission to the decree, and this their provincial did by word of mouth to Bishop Petre. Next came a letter from the Franciscans, who stated that the decree did not preclude them from appealing to the Holy See and making representations against it, but that in the interim they accepted the decree *according to the mind of the Pope*. The Benedictines received it unconditionally, as did the Jesuits, but with regard to the latter, the bishop says that their superior pointed out that they never made any opposition to the decree, on which he remarks: “as indeed they did not in writing; but otherwise desired, as well as the rest, the suspension of the execution of it”. Lastly the Superior of the Carmelites, Challoner's old friend, Mr. Blyth, wrote “a strange sort of letter, full of cavils against the manner of promulgating the decree . . . signifying that he will have recourse (I suppose by way of appeal) *ad supremam in terris auctoritatem*”. In the meantime, however, Mr. Blyth accepted the decree without prejudice to his right of appeal.

<sup>1</sup> See letter quoted in Bishop Challoner's letter to Bishop Stonor, 3rd January, 1749, Westminster Archives, 1745-49. “Mr. Larker,” twice alluded to in this letter, was Mgr. Nicholas Lercari, Secretary to Propaganda for many years, and afterwards Archbishop of Genoa (1767-1802). For a time he acted as Maestro di Camera to the Cardinal Duke of York, and his tenure of this office was the cause of a quarrel between the young Cardinal and his father. For James disliked Mgr. Lercari with such intensity that he prevailed on Pope Benedict XIV. to order him to leave Rome at once. The Cardinal so strongly resented his father's action in this matter that he withdrew to Bologna for a time, and was only induced to return to Rome and to be reconciled to his father by a personal letter from the Pope. See Vaughan, *The Last of the Royal Stuarts*, chap. v.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix D. The original is in Westminster Archives, *Epp. Var.*, xii., 174.

Dr. Challoner continues: "As to the rest we shall behave with that moderation and discretion in regard to the Regulars of all denominations, as to leave no room for even a plausible pretence of cause to complain".

On the 7th of March the bishop again wrote to Christopher Stonor to report the continued activity of the regulars:<sup>1</sup> "They are all at present resolutely bent to move heaven and earth in order to have the decree recalled: they are now very busy in concerting their measures and give out that they are sure of success. Some few of the laity side with them, and Sir H. Bedingfield in particular declaims against the decree as tyrannical; and would have the Catholics join in a common petition against it. But he is not like to meet with any encouragement, and whatever may be pretended in the remonstrances of the Regulars, our friends in your parts may be assured that the most of the laity, and those of the best quality, are and will be for the decree, and for keeping up the authority of the BB. [bishops]. Some suppose Mr. Sheldon's journey beyond the Alps to be in order to make what interest he can against the decree. I suppose you have seen him by this time. The articles which they charge with tyranny particularly relate to the restraining them *ne loca assignata praetergrediantur* and *ne deserant Catholicos semel ipsorum curae commissos*, which they will have to be a taking away the power from the Reg. Superiors of removing or calling over their subjects: and a grievance both to them and the laity, by restraining the liberty of the faithful in point of the choice of confessors. These things, I suppose, they will chiefly insist upon in their remonstrance: but neither are we desirous of restraining them in these points, nor will they be contented with the decree being explained or qualified in these particulars. What they aim at is to be quite independent and to make the bishops mere ciphers."

It appears both from this letter and from other sources that although "Mr. Kit," as Christopher Stonor is frequently called, took an unfavourable view of the regulars' chances of success, they themselves were far from being disheartened, and during the next three months prosecuted their cause vigorously, with

<sup>1</sup> Westminster Archives, *Epp. Var.*, xii., 180.

the active support of Sir Henry Bedingsfeld, as appears from the following letter, which Dr. Challoner wrote to Bishop Stonor on the 14th of March.

“ March 14th, 1748-9.

“ HOND. SIR,

“ I had in due time the favour of your last, with the specimen of a certain Gentleman's eloquence; and your remarks upon it which were very just. After communicating them to Mr. White, I sent them away by the next Poste to Mr. Kit: and at the same time informed him of the resolution of the gentlemen in the opposition, to move heaven and earth by their united endeavours, to have the late orders recalled: in which (as they give out amongst their friends) they make no question but they shall succeed. I also acquainted him with the clamours of a Baronet of your Distr. against the Decree; & his endeavours to persuade the laity to join in a remonstrance against it: In which we cannot apprehend he will meet with any considerable encouragemt: yet lest some people might take occasion from hence to pretend at Hilton that the Cath. Laity are generally against the Decree, I ventured to assure Mr. Kit: that he might assure our friends there, that this is far from the truth; and that the most and best qualified amongst them have quite a different way of thinking. As to the rest, tho: the clauses *ne loca assignata praetergrediantur*, and *ne deserant Catholicos*, &c. will in all appearance be made the chief subjects of their remonstrances, and complaints of grievances, yet it does not appear that the qualifying or explaining those parts of the Decree, would give any satisfaction to certain Gentlemen, unless they could be declared *independent* &c. which there is no appearance they will ever obtain. The Frati have of late been very busy here in their consults, I suppose about the means they are to employ to carry on their cause. Those of other denominations have been also admitted to their meetings: *parturiunt montes*, a little time will shewe us what the birth will be. I have some suspicion: but 'tis no more than a suspicion that they think of deputing someone to Hilton; perhaps Mr. Englefield, who is come out of the country to their consults. I shall endeavour to find this out; and

inform you of what steps I shall learn they are taking in this affair.

“I am, Hon<sup>d</sup> Sir,  
“Your most obedt. Humble Servt.

“J. FISHER.”<sup>1</sup>

Two days later, on the 16th of March, Dr. Challoner sent hurried intelligence of recent developments as far as he was aware of them.

“I find my conjecture verified. Last Saturday Mr. Englefield set sail. He expects to be at his journey's end about the 20th of April. Whether any other is to accompany him I have not yet learnt. Tis likely he is to carry with him the remonstrances of those also of other denominations: at least I know your friend Bl[yt]h was in consult with him last Sunday se'en night. He is also, I believe, to represent the pretended grievances of the laity, amongst whom his brother has joined Sir Henry B[edingsfel]d in his opposition, and I am told endeavours are used to engage the Ladies in a petition against it.<sup>2</sup> I acquaint your nephew with all these particulars by a letter sent by this night's post to Mr. Holden.”

Confronted by such activity at Rome, the vicars apostolic drew up a document addressed to Propaganda in which they explain at length the position of the matter, and their views on the various exceptions taken against the decrees and the brief.<sup>3</sup>

With regard to the reception of the decrees the letter states that almost all the regulars have either refused or delayed to comply with them: and although, after the will of the Holy Father had been made known to them by their generals, they sent to the bishops a declaration of their acceptance, yet this was expressed by several of them in words which were sufficiently ambiguous, not to say ill-disposed.<sup>4</sup> At the time

<sup>1</sup> This was an alias of Dr. Challoner, which at this time he frequently used, though at a subsequent period he discontinued it altogether. I do not find it on any letter after 1762, and before that date only in letters written to Bishops Stonor, Dicconson and Hornyold and one priest, Mr. Gibson.

<sup>2</sup> By “ladies” the various communities of nuns are here understood.

<sup>3</sup> Copy in Westminster Archives, Papers, 1740-45. It is not dated, but on internal evidence it belongs to 1749. It begins “Etsi jam ab anno praeterito”.

<sup>4</sup> “Regulares, autem, fere omnes iis morem gerere vel recusarunt vel distulerunt. Et quamvis postea significata illis per Generales suos SS<sup>mi</sup> Dni nostri voluntate, declarationem aliquam suae acceptationis ad nos miserint, illa a plerisque illorum verbis satis aequivocis, ne dicam malignis, expressa fuit.”

of writing it seemed that some regulars had been inciting the laity against the decrees and inducing them to petition the Holy See for their revocation ; but, so far, without result. Among leading Catholics no peers had taken their side, and only two baronets, Sir Henry Bedingfeld and Sir Henry Englefield. Apart from these gentlemen it was believed that most influential Catholics were pleased with the decrees.

As to the reasons which were alleged for the purpose of rousing Catholics against them, these were thought too wanting in weight to be very seriously considered, so that they are only briefly enumerated. First it was said the bishops would by means of these decrees usurp an intolerable tyranny both over all the regulars and over the laity themselves. For the Catholics of position would now lose their ancient right of having priests of whatever order they preferred as chaplains in their houses, and of dismissing their chaplain, if they wished to do so, without consulting the bishop.

To this the reply is made that the decrees do not even hint at any such thing. They prescribe that all having the cure of souls should receive faculties for hearing confessions from the bishops, but do not contain a word enjoining the Catholic nobility and gentry to consult the bishop in the choice, admission or dismissal of their chaplains.

Another objection was raised on the score that there would be an end to all religious discipline, if the superior of an order could not transfer his subjects from place to place without the consent of the bishop. To this the bishops replied that in the case of regulars who were not living in community, but admitted to the cure of souls and the functions of parish-clergy, it was fair that they should not leave their congregations without the knowledge of the bishop, who is charged with the duty of providing pastors for those congregations.

The further charge, that by these decrees the faithful would be unduly restricted in the choice of a confessor, was easily shown to be without foundation, especially as since the decree faculties had been granted to the regulars for the whole district in which they lived.

Besides these, one or two minor objections are refuted, and the bishops conclude by assuring the Cardinals of Propaganda that no effort will be wanting on their part in all charity,



Christian mildness and moderation, to invite the regulars to perfect concord with them. But they beg the Sacred Congregation to stand firm by the decrees.

During four more years the struggle continued, until it resulted in the issue by the Pope in 1753 of the rules of the mission, in the brief known as *Apostolicum Ministerium*, which regulated the mutual relations between seculars and regulars. It will, however, be more convenient to reserve the story of the settlement and the steps that led to it, until in due time we arrive at that epoch in Dr. Challoner's life to which it belongs.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### BISHOP CHALLONER'S EDITION OF THE BIBLE.

1749-1752.

DURING the period that the long and vexatious dissensions with the regulars lasted, Bishop Challoner was, as we have seen, called on to bear a heavy and responsible share in the struggle ; but this by no means occupied his full time or attention. It was at this time, that is, during the years 1748 and 1749, that he was hard at work on one of his most widely known labours. This was his new edition of the Douay Bible.

We do not know when he first thought of undertaking the difficult task, or what special circumstances led him to think of it at all. But it is clear that there had long existed a need for a new edition of the Bible in English, and clear, too, that such a work, to be received as the standard version, must emanate from high authority. That there existed a want was sufficient reason for him to supply it. His position as bishop gave him the vantage-ground of authority, and there were personal reasons why such a work should strongly appeal to him.

In the first place it would be well-nigh impossible to exaggerate the importance of the Holy Bible in his own interior life. His mind was steeped in the Sacred Scriptures, his memory was stored with passages from them ; in all his works—in his letters even—he breaks out into Scriptural quotation with a facility and aptness which show how his thought found its readiest and most fitting expression in the actual language of the Sacred Books ; throughout his writings the Scriptures are not merely cited as proofs and illustrations, but are used with a freedom and adaptability that show them to have been a living and constant influence in his own life. Even when not

actually quoting Scripture, he frequently writes—more especially in his spiritual works—in Scriptural language, with allusions and reminiscences clearly present to his mind.

It is not surprising that one to whom the Bible was thus a living and energising source of strength and power, should wish to see the same sacred influence more widely at work in the lives of his people. Yet at that time the only Catholic version of the Sacred Scriptures in English was 150 years old, difficult to procure, and hard to understand by reason of its antique style, and the fact that it was not designed for purely popular use.

What was needed was a convenient edition of the whole Douay Bible, in which current expressions might replace obsolete and archaic forms, while preserving the original sense; an edition which could be easily procured through the book-sellers, and which in size, style of printing and price would compare not unfavourably with the ordinary copies of the Anglican Authorised Version. It was a task of the utmost delicacy, and one beset with difficulties; a task, too, of great length, demanding much time, much labour, much patience; besides the necessary linguistic qualifications, it called for wide and minute knowledge, theological as well as exegetical. It was in fact a work not for one man, but for many. Indeed, most current versions, including both the Authorised and the Revised Versions, have been carried out by the joint labours of several scholars working together over a period of years. But in the eighteenth century such a committee of Catholic scholars was a sheer impossibility. Perhaps by unusual fortune, and under the right inspiration and guidance, it might have been realised at Douay or one of the other English Colleges abroad, but in point of fact it never was.

It remained therefore a work for individual enterprise, and this meant to Challoner that he must, without more ado, make a way for its accomplishment. It was the temper of the man quietly to get done that which needed to be done. If there were no other means, he would do it himself. It was the same in all things—prayer-books, catechisms, saints' lives, martyrologies, controversy or ascetical writings, wherever in short there was work to be done which would help towards the salvation of souls. The result might not be the absolute best,

but it would be the best that he could do at that time in face of the actual need. And like all earnest work, which, in spite of limitations, is solid as far as it goes, his attempts have all had some permanent value.

In this matter of the Scriptures, for instance, the shortcomings and defects of his method have been common comment any time this hundred years and more; yet the fact remains that his work has furnished not only the basis, but the substance of all subsequent editions, and for more than a century and a half no one has been found to undertake his task again. There has been criticism, suggestion, aspiration in plenty, but little performance. Neither Dr. Lingard's version of the Gospels from the Greek, nor the very composite text which bore Cardinal Wiseman's *imprimatur*, has come into general use, while in recent years there has even been a return to Bishop Challoner's original text in preference to some later emendations.<sup>1</sup>

His edition of the Bible, then, may claim at the outset the merit of a long and difficult labour, diligently and conscientiously carried through; and to this may be added the practical testimony to its efficiency, afforded by the fact that it has been for so long a time, and during so eventful a period, the recognised version of the Bible for all English-speaking Catholics.

The importance of his work being thus above all question, we shall in no way belittle it, if at the outset we recognise the conditions under which it was accomplished, the limits within which the bishop worked, and the personal qualifications and drawbacks which have left their mark on his version. With regard to the personal element, he would have been the first to admit that, though competent in his degree, he was not the ideal translator of the Scriptures. With all his solid learning, he could not bring to the work of revision the breadth of scholarship that Gregory Martin had devoted to the work of translation, nor had he at command in the narrowly educated clergy around him the diversified knowledge that was shown by the gifted band of scholars—Allen, Bristow and Reynolds—who shared and lightened Martin's work, testing it and

<sup>1</sup> Thus the popular sixpenny New Testament published of late years by Messrs. Burns & Oates follows Dr. Murray's adaptation, representing Challoner's 1749 text.

strengthening it at every step. Neither had he the gift that some of the earlier translators possessed of rendering the sacred text into an English so noble and so moving in its eloquence, that the literature of our country has gained in the Bible a masterpiece in itself, and a source of high inspiration for its greatest writers whether in poetry or prose.

To take the point of language alone, Gregory Martin was not only well versed in the Scriptures, but he was even more famed as a linguist of unusual talent, and his knowledge of Greek and Hebrew enabled him to handle the text of the Vulgate with broad and accurate scholarship, while in Bristow he had a colleague whose knowledge of these languages rivalled his own. Dr. Challoner, trained in the sound classical tradition of Douay, brought to his task a good knowledge of Latin and Greek; but there is nothing in all his works to show that he was master of any Hebrew. His intention was to revise the Douay text according to the Clementine edition of the Vulgate, and to rewrite it in such English as could be understood by the people of the day. In carrying out this aim, he was occasionally led into renderings which proved less accurate than those of the original Douay version; and when Cardinal Wiseman<sup>1</sup> was arguing that a knowledge of Latin, however extensive, is insufficient for the translation of the Vulgate, he was able to show that Bishop Challoner's mistakes were due—in some instances at least—to his want of the wider knowledge which acquaintance with Hebrew would have secured.

On the subject of Dr. Challoner's work, regarded from the literary standpoint, little need here be said. It is not an aspect on which he himself would have cared to dwell. Though he was always concerned to write with care, he would probably have considered that to devote much attention to composition would show want of humility and even of that Christian simplicity on which he set such store. He would have regarded it as undue care for externals. Moreover, to him, "the beauty of the King's daughter was from within". In any case, in spite of many obvious improvements, he has not given us a

<sup>1</sup> *Dublin Review*, vol. ii., p. 475 *et seqq.*, "Catholic Versions of the Scripture," an unsigned article on Lingard's translation of the Gospels, which he subsequently republished in his *Essays on Various Subjects*.



translation which can challenge comparison with some of the older versions in that respect.

With regard to the aim which Dr. Challoner set before himself, we must first recognise that here, as always, he did not undertake original work. He did not propose a new translation of the Bible: he was content to accept what already existed—the old Douay version—to be reproduced with such alterations as he considered would suit it for popular use. That these alterations were so extensive as to result in practically a new version never induced him to consider his edition as other than a simple recension of the Douay Bible.

Fully to understand his work, then, we must go back and see briefly what the Douay Bible was, how it came to be, and what place it fills in the lengthy series of English versions of the Scriptures. Since it was published as the official Catholic version, in direct antagonism to those on the Protestant side produced at the time of the Reformation, it will be necessary to touch briefly at least on the position of the Catholic Church in England with regard to vernacular renderings of the Scriptures at the time when the Protestant versions first appeared.

The entire subject of the pre-Reformation translations of the Bible, obscure in itself, has been rendered yet more difficult by the prevalence of fixed ideas based on ancient but groundless traditions. The whole case, in fact, needs restating. The popular idea long was that until Wycliffe, patiently working in his study at Lutterworth, translated the whole Bible, there was no English version of the Scriptures. But the Wycliffe legend fell to pieces as soon as it was tested by critical methods, and it has been demolished time and again by writers with no bias in favour of the Catholic Church. Yet, though now exploded, it has left behind it a widespread view that all pre-Reformation translations are Wycliffite in origin, and therefore each of the two recognised versions which were current during the fifteenth century has been appropriated and labelled as “a Lollard production”. Against this view Abbot Gasquet has protested in his two essays entitled “The Pre-Reformation English Bible,”<sup>1</sup> in which he contends “that Catholics in pre-Reformation days

<sup>1</sup> *Dublin Review*, July, 1894, republished in *The Old English Bible and other Essays*, London, 1897, p. 161.

had in England, as elsewhere, a recognised vernacular version of the Scriptures, and that these translations, now published under the name of 'Wycliffite,' were in pre-Reformation days uniformly regarded as perfectly orthodox by undoubtedly loyal sons of mother Church".

That Dr. Gasquet's conclusions would meet with general acceptance was not to be expected, and the very scope of his articles was rather to show cause for the reopening of the question, than to enter on a minute discussion of all the evidence. Yet the proofs he alleges are in themselves so striking that they seem to have made some impression, even on those who dissent from his conclusions,<sup>1</sup> and we are stating the matter at the lowest when we take it as established by him that there were English versions approved and permitted by the Church. This, of course, is not the same as to argue that the pre-Reformation prelates were carrying on an active propaganda for the dissemination of the Scriptures in the vernacular, but it does show, as Dr. Kenyon readily admits, that the leaders of the English Church were not hostile to an English Bible. The continual use made by the Catholic Church of great portions of the Scriptures, alone refutes the ancient calumny that she denies them to her members; and the fact that she permits, rather than urges, the use of the Bible as a whole is based on quite other considerations. Moreover in this matter the standpoint of the Church is entirely different from that of the sects. The very emphasis with which Protestantism in its primitive forms placed the Bible in the hands of its followers as the sole and sufficient rule of faith, rendered it incumbent on the first Reformers to scatter their versions of the Scripture broadcast. But the Church has always regarded the Sacred Books, not as the rule of faith, but as an accessory thereto.

That the Church in this country did in fact allow the use of the Scripture in the vernacular is made clear by the oft-quoted words of Sir Thomas More, when he shows that the prohibition of Wycliffite versions by the Council of Oxford "neither forbiddeth the translations to be read that were already well done of old before Wyclif's days, nor dammeth his because it was new, but because it was naught; nor prohibiteth new to be

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, second edition, 1896.

made, but provideth that they shall not be read if they be made amiss, till they be by good examination amended”.

On the other hand, that there was no large demand for the Bible as a whole in the vernacular is clear from the fact that no English edition even of the New Testament was printed until 1525, when Tyndale's unauthorised version appeared.

In 1534 Convocation petitioned for an English version of the whole Bible, and in the following year, under the sinister patronage of Cromwell, Coverdale's Bible was published, being the first complete edition of the Scriptures printed in English. Though it received no ecclesiastical sanction, it was not interfered with, and many of its phrases, familiar by long and frequent use, passed into the Authorised Version. Coverdale was also the editor of Cromwell's "Great Bible," which was published in 1539 and ordered to be placed in all the churches. Subsequent editions were numerous, one of which at least had the authorisation of the Bishop of London, Cuthbert Tunstall. This "Great Bible" has been of lasting mark, because from it is derived the "Prayer-Book Version" of the psalms which the Authorised Version was never able to replace, and the phrasing of which has entered so intimately into the national life and literature as to be for all time inseparable therefrom.

The next translation of the Bible that calls for special notice is the Geneva version, so called because it was executed at Geneva by a group of Reformers, headed by Whittingham, a connection by marriage of Calvin. This edition, which approximated more to the Hebrew, introduced into England for the first time the division of the Bible into verses, following in this the arrangement of Robert Etienne, the great printer, better known to us as Stephanus. Though the Geneva Bible was never read in the churches, it was largely used for private reading, and a great number of editions was called for to supply the demand for family Bibles.

The success of this version, which was first published in 1560, reacted on the Great Bible, which was henceforth regarded as less accurate, and therefore no longer suitable for official ecclesiastical use. This led to the further revision of the Great Bible, which became known as the Bishops' Bible from the large number of Anglican prelates employed on it. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Matthew Parker, himself

acted as editor. The Bishops' Bible replaced the Great Bible in all the churches immediately upon its appearance in 1568; but it never succeeded in supplanting the Geneva version, which continued to be the most popular for private use. The latter had the advantage of being issued in compact and handy form, and the popularity it attained is shown by the fact that more than a hundred different editions were issued before a century had elapsed.

This was the state of affairs that confronted the Catholic scholars exiled at Douay when in 1568 Dr. Allen succeeded with their help in founding the English College there. They were quick to realise that there was a great popular demand for the Bible in English, and that the English people, still as a body Catholic, were reading the Scriptures in versions that could only be regarded as translated with controversial bias, and which were accompanied with marginal commentaries or notes, Anglican or Calvinistic as the case might be, but heretical in doctrine, and anti-Catholic in tone. Not that the Douay theologians approved of this wholesale and indiscriminate Bible reading; in fact their Introduction to the New Testament contains a long passage in which the unrestricted handling of the Sacred Books is shown to be a source of evil rather than good, and the arguments in this sense are drawn from the abuses of the times. "We must not imagin that in the primitive church . . . the translated Bibles into the vulgar tonges were in the hands of every husbandman, artificer, prentice, boies, girles, mistresse, maide, man: that they were sung, plaied, alleaged of every tinker, taverner, rimer, minstrel: that they were for table talk, for alebenches, for boates, and barges, and for every prophane person and companie. No, in those better times men were neither so ill nor so curious of themselves so to abuse the blessed booke of Christ: neither was there any such easy means before printing was invented, to disperse the copies into the handes of every man as now there is."

But if men could not be deterred from this indiscriminate use of the Scriptures, it were at least well that they should have a faithful rendering. Their purpose the Douay translators thus explained in the completed work: "We, therefore, having compassion to see our beloved countriemen, with extreme danger of their soules, to use onely such prophane



translations, and erroneous men's mere phantasies, for the pure and blessed word of truth, much also moved thereunto by the desires of many devout persons, have set forth for you (benigne readers) the New Testament to begin withal, trusting that it may give occasion to you, after diligent perusing thereof, to lay away at least such their impure versions as hitherto you have been forced to occupie”.

The Douay diaries record the beginning and the end of the work. In the account of the year 1578 we read:—

“On October 16, or thereabout, Mr. Martin, Licentiate, began a translation of the Bible into English, that so at length he might counteract the corruptions of the heretics by which they have so long lamentably imposed upon nearly all the people of our country. And in order that the work—which it is hoped will be most useful,—may be published the sooner, he completes two chapters every day, and to ensure greater correctness, Dr. Allen, our President, and our Master, Mr. Bristow, read through these same chapters and [MS. imperfect] . . . faithfully correct them according to their wisdom.”<sup>1</sup>

In the translation the Vulgate was professedly followed in preference to the Greek, as indeed must be the case in all Catholic translations, owing to the supreme authority which the Church attaches to the Vulgate; but, as the title-page shows, it was also carefully collated with the Greek and Hebrew versions throughout.

Cardinal Allen had a wide reputation for his knowledge of Scripture, and was a member of Cardinal Carafa's Commission for emending the text of the Septuagint, as a preparation for the revision of the Vulgate, which was then in contemplation. The notes on the Old Testament are believed to have been written by Dr. Worthington, afterwards president; those on the New Testament were by Bristow himself. The New Testament was completed while the college was at Rheims, and published during the year 1582; but though the translation of the Old Testament was vigorously carried on to a conclusion, it was many years before means could be found to publish it. At length, after more than a quarter of a century, it appeared, the first volume in 1609, the second in the following year. It therefore came out in time to influence in some re-

<sup>1</sup> P. 145.



spects the Anglican Authorised Version of 1611. The Rheims New Testament was indeed well known in England, because the controversial character of Bristow's notes forced it on the attention of the Anglican Divines. One of these, Fulke, Master of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, had answered it by the odd expedient of reprinting it, notes and all, in parallel columns with the New Testament from the Bishops' Bible, accompanied by his own notes. One result of this proceeding was to procure a far wider circulation of the Catholic version than Catholics themselves could have obtained for it. Fulke's edition, which came out in 1589, also reappeared in 1601 and 1617, while the fourth edition of each of these rival issues of the Rheims Testament appeared in the same year, 1633.

The Old Testament was published again in 1635, after which date it was never reprinted. Even with regard to the New Testament, after the fourth edition in 1633 no further edition appeared for close on a hundred years, until in 1730 Dr. Witham published his version in two volumes.<sup>1</sup> It is strange that for a whole century—a period which included the brief yet energetic revival of James II.—there should have been no attempt to reproduce the Catholic translation in more modern form; but the fact that it was not done, emphasises the necessity there was in Dr. Challoner's time for a new and thorough revision. To carry this undertaking through to a successful issue much required to be done. First and foremost was the question of the text itself. No change having been effected in the current version for a hundred and fifty years, the first and chief need was to revise those passages which by lapse of time had become obsolete. Many expressions usual in Elizabethan English had become antiquated, and even unintelligible to ordinary readers in the Georgian era. Nor was this all. The English of the Douay Bible was in itself out of the common. Indeed, on its first publication, that remarkable convert, Sir Tobie Mathew, intimate friend of Bacon, and no mean judge, humorously declared that it was not English at all. That the translators were able to pen English not un-

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Nary's new version of the New Testament published in Ireland in 1718 never attained wide or lasting popularity, though it ran to a second edition in the following year. Dr. Witham's translation also reached a second edition (in 1733). His rendering is the only one which influenced later versions to any material degree.

worthy of their own great epoch, is shown, indeed, by many a noble passage, but they were so anxious to follow the Vulgate with scrupulous fidelity that they frequently render a Latin word by an equivalent itself more Latin than English; and even invented such Latinisms for the purpose. Thus the Vulgate phrase "*concorporales et comparticipes*" appears in the Douay version as "*Concorporate and comparticipant*". The "*Deo odibiles*" of Romans i. 30 becomes "*Odible to God*," and "*semetipsum exinanivit*" (Phil. ii. 7) is translated "*He exinanited himself*," while three verses later we read, "*That in the name of Jesus every knee bowe of the celestials, terrestrials and infernals*".

These are extreme cases, but similar instances are of sufficiently frequent occurrence to justify the effort to simplify the version. The translators themselves were conscious of the difficulty likely to be caused by such expressions, and in their preface they defend some of these renderings, including the "*exinanited*" of Philippians ii. 7, and the other curious word used in the same epistle, "*reflorished*" (iv. 10), on the ground that there were no proper equivalents in English. They further argued that by frequent use such words, though of classical origin, would become as familiar as *Amen*, *Alleluia*, *Hosanna* and other Hebrew words. This, however, had not proved to be the case, and the sense of the Scriptures was obscured, rather than helped, by such close adhering to the letter. Such phrases as "*There is left a sabbatisme for the people of God*" (Heb. iv. 10); or "*tempted in all things by similitude, except sinne*" (Heb. iv. 15), seem needlessly difficult, while some sentences are barely intelligible at all. Thus in Hebrews xiii. 16 we read, "*And beneficence and communication do not forget, for with such hostes God is promerited*". And in Ephesians vi. 12, "*For our wrestling is not against flesh and bloud: but against Princes and Potestats, against the rectors of the world of this darkness, against the spirituals of wickednes in the celestials*".

While noting these instances of stiff and pedantic usage, it is well to remember that these are exceptional. The substance and "*woof and warp*" of our Douay version is vigorous and noble English. When the superiority of the Anglican version is urged, as is frequently the case, we must not forget how

much, in the New Testament at least, the Authorised Version owes to Rheims. In quite recent years this influence has not only been admitted by Anglican writers, but exhaustively studied and estimated.<sup>1</sup> Many phrases and happy renderings were borrowed by the editors of the Authorised Version from that of Rheims, and when Dr. Challoner in his turn looked to the Authorised Version for suitable English phrases with which to replace the obsolete Latinisms, he was only returning a compliment paid in an earlier age.

Another point of scarcely less importance was the revision of the notes, particularly those to the New Testament. For Gregory Martin's notes, learned and weighty as they were, were directed against a class of adversaries that had long since passed away. To single out for straightforward denunciation particular errors in vogue in Elizabeth's time was no longer needful, and in general the notes to the Bible could with advantage be made less polemical.

Bishop Challoner's work, then, was in the first place thoroughly to revise the text, including in this process the work of securing conformity with the Clementine Vulgate, which had, of course, not been published when the Rheims New Testament was issued, but which appeared in 1592. In the next place he had to revise or rewrite the notes and short Introductions to the various books. His method with regard to the text, roughly speaking, was to take the Douay Bible as the groundwork. When he met with a word or phrase which seemed to him to need simplifying, he usually, or at least very frequently, had recourse to the Authorised Version, always avoiding, however, a very close reproduction and seeming of set purpose to retain minor differences. Often he altered a phrase by transposing words or entirely changing them for others. In this process clearness is often gained at some sacrifice of dignity.

A comparison of any page of Dr. Challoner's edition with Douay, on the one hand, and the Authorised Version on the other, will exhibit his course of proceeding. To take one short and familiar phrase as an illustration, we may look at the first verse of the psalm *Miserere*. In the Douay Bible this

<sup>1</sup> See *The Part of Rheims in the Making of the English Bible*, by James G. Carleton, D.D. (Oxford, 1902),

reads, "Have mercie on me, O God, according to thy great mercie. And according to the multitude of thy commiserations take away myne iniquitie." Here Dr. Challoner retains the body of the verse, but for the Latin "commiserations" he substitutes "tender mercies" from the Authorised Version, and again follows the latter by changing "take away" into "blot out," as being more faithful to the Vulgate "dele". The only minor alteration he makes in this verse was to alter "mine," which he probably, though unfortunately, regarded as archaic, into "my".

As an instance of alterations made without reference to the Authorised Version, we may take verse 14 in the same psalm, in which the Douay reads, "Render unto me the joy of thy salvation, and confirm me with the principal spirit". Here he only follows the Anglican in changing "render" into "restore," and then ignoring the translation "and uphold me with thy free spirit," he rewrites it as "and strengthen me with a perfect spirit".

More common instances of alterations made by his own independent judgment are to be found on every page in the recasting of sentences, by which they read more in accordance with the taste of his own age. It was unfortunately just in these purely literary changes that the bishop's limitations made themselves felt, and his emendations have often been regretted by later scholars. Thus Cardinal Wiseman wrote: "Though Dr. Challoner did well to alter many too decided Latinisms, which the old translators retained, he weakened the language considerably by destroying inversion, where it was congenial at once to the genius of our language and the construction of the original, and by the insertion of particles where they were by no means necessary".<sup>1</sup>

Another alteration of a widespread character made by Challoner, which Cardinal Wiseman regrets, is the substitution in all cases of "the Lord" instead of "our Lord," by which the Douay translators nearly always rendered "Dominus". This difference between the original Catholic and Protestant versions was not without deep significance, and it was a bold step on Dr. Challoner's part to effect this change. The point was so clearly at issue between Catholics and Protestants that

<sup>1</sup> *Dublin Review*, vol. ii., p. 476.

the note upon it (1 Tim. vi. 20) is specially referred to in the Preface to the original Rheims New Testament. The argument there is that phrases and words which may be harmless in themselves ought to be avoided if they have been adopted by heretics in such a way as to imply new and erroneous views. "And though some of the said terms have been by some occasion *obiter*, without ill meaning, spoken by Catholics before these heretics arose, yet now knowing them to be the proper speeches of heretics, Christian men are bound to avoid them. Wherein the Church of God hath ever been as diligent to resist novelties of words as her adversaries are busy to invent them. For which cause she will not have us communicate with them, nor follow their fashion and phrase newly invented, though in the nature of the words sometime there be no harm. . . . As now we Catholics must not say '*the* Lord' but '*our* Lord,' as we say *our* Lady for His mother, not *the* Lady. Let us keep our forefathers' words, and we shall easily keep our old and true faith that we had of the first Christians."<sup>1</sup>

Probably Dr. Challoner, considering that the extreme heat both of persecution and controversy had passed away, and that discussions were being conducted, if with no less determination, yet in a more moderate manner, felt that the reason for avoiding this particular form had ceased to exist in a pressing degree, and as it was undeniably nearer the Vulgate, he would be justified in adopting it. And in truth Cardinal Wiseman does not make out a convincing case against the change. He defends the original Douay usage of "our Lord" by analogy from the Syrian Rite, and there leaves the question, merely hinting in his conclusion at the practical distinction which may be drawn between Scripture on the one hand, and popular speech and traditional prayers on the other. "If therefore it be considered too great a departure from accuracy in translation to restore the pronoun in the text of our version, let us at least preserve it in our instructions, and still more in our formularies of prayer." It is precisely this distinction, added to the enhanced accuracy of translation, that sufficiently and adequately defends Dr. Challoner's procedure on this point.

Another minor point that called for consideration was the spelling of some of the proper names. As a general rule he

<sup>1</sup> Annotations to 1 Tim. vi. 20, p. 585.



followed the Douay version, with such slight modifications as Isaias for Isaie, and Jeremias for Jeremie. But in some instances there is discrepancy between the Douay Bible and the Rheims New Testament: thus, for instance, the former has Isaie where the latter has Esay. In these cases he introduced uniformity, taking his substitutes direct from the Vulgate. Sometimes he is not consistent with himself: thus in one case we have "Ezekiel" and "Macchabees," while the books themselves are headed "Ezechiel" and "Machabees". These, however, are small points. His principle was to follow the Vulgate for the Old Testament, and ordinary English usage for the New.

From all that has been said, some idea can be gained of the difficulties Dr. Challoner had to face in undertaking his new version of the Douay Bible, and the manner in which he met them. The result of his patient labour is, like all his work, marked by care and thoroughness, and in this special case we may note the courage with which he set himself to a task which no one since has been found to face, and the broadmindedness with which he approximated to the Authorised Version where he thought it better. He and the Catholics of his age have been regarded by their posterity as penned within the narrowest limits of orthodoxy, even to the extent of incurring the reproach of a blind conservatism. That they were straitly orthodox is true; yet we find them on occasion not afraid to follow lines of action, the contemplation of which fills our more complex and apprehensive age with misgivings. Dr. Challoner's version of the Scriptures has never been thought by Catholics to be a final or ideal solution of a standing difficulty. Charles Butler wrote of it: "The version is imperfect. A more correct version is perhaps at present the greatest spiritual want of the English Catholics." But though nearly a hundred years have gone by since these words were written, no one has been found bold enough to face the storm of criticism and of difficulties which such an undertaking would call into being. The fact that Dr. Challoner was himself a bishop secured for his version acceptance at the hands of the rulers of the Church. His great courage and habitual indifference to what others might say against him made it easy for him to follow out his own path, regardless of outcry. The emendations he required he found in the Anglican Version, and with the fearless Catholic instinct

that absorbs all that is best in the world around, and presses it into the service of the Church, he boldly adopted them. Even in his day it needed a bishop to make himself responsible for the attempt. He succeeded in effecting a practical compromise which, evoking no enthusiasm, has at least served as the basis and groundwork of all subsequent versions.

Yet though his services in this respect have been amply acknowledged, Catholics have not been blind to the shortcomings of this edition. Charles Butler's opinion as to the necessity of a new version has already been quoted. Many years later Cardinal Wiseman expressed the same view:—

"We cannot but regret that no one properly qualified and properly authorised has yet been found to undertake such corrections and improvements in our received version, as would finally settle its text, and save it from the repeated liberty which has been taken with it. To call it any longer the Douay or Rheims version is an abuse of terms. It has been altered and modified till scarce any verse remains as it was originally published: and so far as simplicity and energy of style are concerned, the changes are in general for the worse."<sup>1</sup>

One more witness we may cite, as being one who, by his knowledge of the Bible and mastery of the English tongue, speaks with high authority. Cardinal Newman, in his "History of the Text of the Rheims and Douay Version of the Holy Scripture"<sup>2</sup> devotes a section to "Dr. Challoner's Bible". In the main he adopts Cardinal Wiseman's conclusion, though he shows greater reverence towards "the pious prelate, to whom the English Church is so much indebted". Having considered several passages in detail, he continues:—

"Looking at Dr. Challoner's labours on the Old Testament as a whole, we may pronounce that they issue in little short of a new translation. They can as little be said to be made on the basis of the Douay as on the basis of the Protestant version. Of course there must be a certain resemblance between any two Catholic versions whatever, because they are both translations of the same vulgate; but this connection between the Douay and Challoner being allowed for, Challoner's version is even nearer to the Protestant, than it is to the Douay; nearer,

<sup>1</sup> *Dublin Review*, ii., 476.

<sup>2</sup> *Rambler*, July, 1859; reprinted in *Tracts Theological and Ecclesiastical*.

that is, not in grammatical structure, but in phraseology and diction.”<sup>1</sup>

In details he considers that “undoubtedly he has sacrificed force and vividness in some of his changes”. Another point to which Newman draws attention is the fact that Challoner’s text of the New Testament has, both during his lifetime and after his death, by himself as well as by others, been subjected to a continual modification, while the Old Testament has continued with but little variation.

“Challoner’s revision is the first and the last to which the Douay version of the Old Testament has been subjected; the text remains almost *verbatim* as he left it. . . . The same, however, cannot be said of Challoner’s New Testament, and for this reason, if for no other, that the texts of his editions vary from each other; and moreover, as he was not the author of all the changes introduced into the later editions, (for as Charles Butler tells us, ‘alterations were made in every edition to his dissatisfaction,’) it is not wonderful that the tendency to fresh changes which was powerful enough even in his lifetime to introduce itself in spite of his wishes into his own work, should have had actual results after his death.”<sup>2</sup>

This passage from the Cardinal’s essay fitly leads to the two points that remain to be mentioned: the appearance of the various editions of the bishop’s translation, and their effect on the different versions used to-day in Great Britain, Ireland, America and indeed throughout the English-speaking world.

There is nothing to show how long the entire work took to complete, but it appears that the New Testament was taken in hand first, and submitted for approval to two theologians at Douay, Dr. Green, the president, and Mr. Walton, the professor of theology. Their approbation is dated 26th September, 1748, which shows that the New Testament was finished at latest by the summer of that year. It was published in 1749, by itself, without waiting for the completion of the Old Testament. This latter must have occupied the bishop for the better part of two years, as it was not published until 1750.

In one respect it was a great improvement on its predecessors. Frequent complaint had been made of the incon-

<sup>1</sup> *Tracts Theological and Ecclesiastical*, p. 370.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 383.

venient bulk of the folio and quarto volumes.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Challoner avoided this inconvenience by publishing his Bible in five neat octavo volumes, well and clearly printed, the second edition of the New Testament forming the fifth volume. There is no printer's name, but a comparison of the type with that used in works published by Thomas Meighan, the Catholic bookseller of Drury Lane, shows that it was in all probability printed and published by him.<sup>2</sup> The New Testament could also be obtained without the Old, and the sale was large enough to lead the bishop to prepare a third edition, with very numerous changes. This was published in 1752.

It is curious that the most exhaustive study and comparison of the various editions of Dr. Challoner's New Testament has been made not by Catholics, but by a Protestant. Dr. Cotton, the Archdeacon of Cashel, in 1855, published his *Rhemes and Doway: an Attempt to shew what has been done by Roman Catholics for the diffusion of the Holy Scriptures*. Writing of this work, Cardinal Newman, while paying tribute to the author's "minute, exact and persevering diligence," points out how marked it is by "incidental insinuation, sometimes unfair, sometimes ignorant, always ill-natured, to the disadvantage of Catholic Ecclesiastics".<sup>3</sup> Yet notwithstanding its unpleasant tone, there is much careful research in the book, and among other information it gives in an Appendix (No. v., p. 35) a long, complete collation of the three earliest editions of Dr. Challoner's New Testament. The result of this comparison is striking, for whereas Dr. Cotton calculates that the second differs from the first in 124 passages, he states that the third differs from the first in more than 2,000 places of the text.

A second edition of the whole Bible was published in 1764, which included the fourth edition of the New Testament. The latter reached two more editions during Dr. Challoner's lifetime, the fifth in 1772, and the sixth in 1777, both published

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Witham's Preface.

<sup>2</sup> This view is held by Mr. Gillow, *Bibl. Dict. Eng. Cath.*, i., 455; but Dr. Cotton (*op. cit.*, *sup.*, p. 50) ascribes it to Richard Fitzsimons, a Dublin printer, on the ground that the first editions, including that of 1764, are all from the same press; but his copy of the 1764 edition contains "a list of subscribers, almost all bearing Irish names; and a list of books sold by Fitzsimons". But this would be easily explained by Fitzsimons taking copies from Meighan in sheets, and binding up his own list of subscribers and his advertisements with them.

<sup>3</sup> *Tracts Theological and Ecclesiastical*, pp. 359-60.



by James Coghlan, who became the principal Catholic bookseller during the latter part of the century.

After Dr. Challoner's death the effect of his work, if not his actual performance, gained ever-widening influence. So far as the Old Testament is concerned, we may say that his rendering remains the standard Catholic version, while his New Testament has served as the basis of nearly all the numerous and dissimilar texts which have since been published. The considerable element that remains common to all is his work. This will be seen from the briefest summary of the different English versions from the time of his death onward. The story begins in Ireland, where in 1783, two years after Challoner's death, Archbishop Carpenter approved of the New Testament often referred to under his name, though it was edited by Dr. MacMahon, an Irish priest of good repute as a scholar. Eight years later, in 1791, the same editor published for Dr. Troy, who had succeeded Dr. Carpenter, a complete edition of the whole Bible. This is the edition which became so widely used, not only in Ireland, but also in England, under the name of Dr. Troy's Bible. As the preface states, it was founded on the version of Bishop Challoner, though MacMahon's alterations were very considerable. It is further interesting, because so far as the New Testament is concerned, it was the origin of the English version issued by Dr. Wiseman in 1847. It is therefore the direct ancestor, not only of many editions used in Ireland, but of several English reprints.

Another Irish edition of the Bible, formed still more closely on Challoner, was Dr. Murray's Bible, published in 1835, from which came the widely diffused Dr. Denvir's New Testament (1838 and succeeding years), and Dr. MacHale's New Testament (1846). As Dr. Murray's Bible has gradually supplanted that of Dr. Troy in Ireland, and has been followed by many of the most popular reprints in England, it will be seen that Challoner's text has by this means come to be once more the most widely used version, both in this country and in Ireland.

In England we find again that it was the groundwork of the three chief editions of the early nineteenth century, Dr. Gibson's Bible (1816-17) Syers's Bible (1811-13) and, best known of all, the Haydock Bible (1811-14) and its derivatives.



In Scotland, Dr. Hay's Bible, which first came out in 1761, again avowedly follows Challoner's text, as also does the American edition published in Philadelphia in 1805.

From this brief and far from exhaustive outline will be seen how far-reaching have been the effects of Dr. Challoner's edition of the Bible. We may sum up our results in Cardinal Newman's words :—

"Considering, then, Dr. Troy is followed by the editions of Haydock, Dr. Murray, Dr. Denvir and Cardinal Wiseman, which we have taken to represent the current text or texts of the day, we are safe in saying, first, that Challoner's revision has been hitherto a final one; next that there is at present as regards the Old Testament, one and only one received text, or very nearly so."<sup>1</sup>

So far as the New Testament is concerned, the editions have borrowed and re-borrowed with such frequent interchange, that it is quite a complicated task to arrive at the history of each individual edition, but here once more judgment may be pronounced by Cardinal Newman, at least with regard to the chief versions, all of which he traces to one or other of Challoner's early editions, when he writes "that Dr. Murray and Dr. Denvir follow Challoner's early editions and that Cardinal Wiseman and Mr. Haydock follow his later editions, and Dr. Troy's".<sup>2</sup>

Thus it is that when we regard the way in which the actual words of our versions find their way through sermons, catechisms, and prayer-books into every-day Catholic life, it is possible to see clearly how great a work Dr. Challoner, with all his limitations, achieved in revising the early versions of Douay and of Rheims.

<sup>1</sup> *Tracts Theological and Ecclesiastical*, p. 395.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 399.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### PASTORAL WORK AND PAMPHLETS.

1748-1752.

THE work in connection with the new edition of the Bible had occupied the bishop for three or four years before 1750, and the dispute with the regular clergy was also dragging its slow length along. Meanwhile the days as they passed brought their regular round of administrative duties.

One of the most pressing needs of the moment was the provision of a boys' school for the South of England. Since Twyford had been closed in consequence of the confusion resulting from the 1745 rising, there had been no place where Catholics could send their boys except to Dame Alice's school in Lancashire, or the Franciscan establishment at Edgbaston in Warwickshire; neither of which exactly met the want. The success of Twyford showed that there were many Catholics of good position who did not wish to send their younger boys across the seas to St. Omer or Douay; and it was desirable that a new school should be established within convenient distance of London and yet in a country-place sufficiently secluded to avoid attracting public attention.

The place finally chosen was Lord Aston's manor-house of Standon Lordship in Hertfordshire, of which some account has already been given.<sup>1</sup> It was a large house about twenty-five miles from London, concealed by a range of low hills from the great coach-road that ran from London to Cambridge and on to Lincoln, York and the North. The house afforded ample accommodation and possessed a private chapel.

Here Dr. Challoner decided to found the school, the subsequent history of which was bound up with that of the

<sup>1</sup> See *supra*, pp. 214-215.

London District in a way he could not have foreseen. It was this school, afterwards moved to Old Hall, some two miles away, which afforded a shelter to the refugees from Douay when the English College was ruined by the French Revolution, and from this nucleus Bishop Douglass formed St. Edmund's College, the diocesan college first for the London Vicariate and afterwards for the see of Westminster.<sup>1</sup>

Although there has been much uncertainty about the date of this foundation, we now know that the school was opened in the summer of 1749.<sup>2</sup> The first authority to be discovered for this date was the express statement made by Bishop James Talbot in a report to Propaganda dated 2nd August, 1786, that the school at Standon Lordship was founded in the year 1749. This statement by the bishop receives confirmation from a *MS. List of Douay Clergy*, preserved in the Westminster Archives, in which there is mention of a priest called James Postlethwaite, who, it is stated, left Douay on 2nd July, 1749, "to conduct a school at Standon, Herts". This priest was a Lancashire man, then twenty-six years old, who had spent twelve years at the English College, and had been ordained on 23rd March, 1748, rather more than a year before he came to Standon. A fuller account of Mr. Postlethwaite is found in the official report of his departure from Douay addressed by the Vice-President, Francis Petre, to Dr. Christopher Stonor.<sup>3</sup>

"This is to desire you to acquaint the Propaganda with the

<sup>1</sup> As St. Edmund's, at every stage of its early history, was so connected with the work of the Vicars Apostolic of London, and was in a special way their own creation, it is fitting that so many of them have found a last resting-place within its walls. The tombs of Bishops Giffard, Petre, Talbot, Douglass, Poynter, Bramston, Gradwell and Griffiths are all within the chapel precincts.

<sup>2</sup> Mgr. Ward in his *History of St. Edmund's College* (Kegan Paul, London, 1893) gave 1753 as the date of the Standon Lordship School. In this he followed the information then available, as it was not till some years afterwards that he discovered in the Westminster Archives the statement of Bishop Talbot referred to in the text. Mr. Gillow, following Bishop Milner's somewhat loose statement that it was founded "within ten years of the dissolution of the celebrated school at Twyford," says (*Bibl. Dict. Eng. Cath.*, i., 81, s.v. Aston) that it was established about 1755. Elsewhere (*op. cit.*, iv., 10, s.v. Kendal) he places the opening in 1752, thus following Clutterbuck, the county historian of Hertfordshire. This view was founded on the fact that the last Lord Aston did not die until 20th August, 1751, and it was assumed that the school was not founded till his death, whereas in fact he had for some time been resident at his Staffordshire seat, Tixall, where he died.

<sup>3</sup> Westminster Archives, *Epp. Var.*, xii., 198.

departure from hence of Mr. James Postlethwaite, Priest, for the mission in England, on the 2nd inst. ; he is gone at the earnest desire of our Bishops and Chiefs to begin a new school, which Mr. Richard Kendal is setting up, and Lord Aston has given him his seat at Standon for that purpose, and it was to have been opened last Saturday. Mr. Postlethwaite has always behaved well here, a virtuous, learned and very regular young man, whom we were very lought [*i.e.* loath] to part with, only for the public good."

A few days before, 2nd July, 1749, Alban Butler had written to the agent in more familiar strain: "Dick Kendal has set up a school at Standon, Lord Aston being fixed in Staffordshire. One is gone from hence to teach."<sup>1</sup>

But Mr. Kendal was not allowed to begin his new work without opposition. On 16th July, 1749, Bishop Stonor, Vicar Apostolic of the Midland District, wrote to his nephew at Rome:—

"I suppose you have heard that Standon was designed to succeed Twyford. All things were progressing for its being opened this month, and Harry and Frank were to be sent thither. But a stop has happened from the opposition of a Parson's and Justice's. Whether or no it can be removed I know not."

It would be interesting to obtain the details of this opposition, but nothing more is known except a statement dated 7th August, 1749, to the effect that Mr. Postlethwaite was already at Standon, though the school was not yet opened. The Vice-President of Douay thus sends the news to Rome: "They tell me from England that the Parson and Justices make great opposition against Mr. Kendal's school. It is not yet opened but Mr. Postlethwaite is at Standon."<sup>2</sup>

By the end of August, however, the difficulties were overcome, and Mr. Petre writes to Dr. Stonor: "Standon School began soon after St. John, and I do not hear of any more noise about it". "St. John" in this connection clearly refers to the festival of the Decollation on 29th August, so we may take it as granted that the opening of the school took place either in the last days of August or early in September, 1749.

Of school-life at Standon we have a very full account, as

<sup>1</sup> *Efp. Var.*, xii., 196.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 202.



STANDON LORDSHIP.





the original "Rules of Standon School" are still preserved at Old Hall.<sup>1</sup> They are in an unknown handwriting, probably that of Mr. Postlethwaite, with later additions by Mr. Kendal. From these rules we get a singularly vivid picture of school-life in those days. It should be remembered, however, that the boys there were for the most part quite young, so that the picture would have to be modified, if there were question of school-life for older boys. The boy at Standon Lordship led a life which, though it seems Spartan in its sternness now, was by no means unduly hard in the middle of the eighteenth century. Six o'clock in summer and half-past six in winter was not very early rising at that date, and a quarter of an hour was amply enough for the Standon Lordship boy to dress, seeing that he had to wash in a special wash-house, downstairs, under supervision of a master. After this he had to submit to feminine help, and had to sit and learn his catechism, while the house-keeper or the housemaid combed out his long hair. On Sunday it was powdered as well as combed, and probably tied back with a ribbon. Mass was heard by all daily, after which the boy went to a breakfast consisting of boiled milk and milk pottage. When this was over he went straightway to school, where he remained the whole morning until twelve, with the exception of one quarter of an hour's break at ten o'clock. Dinner was served at mid-day, after which he could play to his heart's content till two. He seems to have spent this time at ninepins or "drawing ye cart about," or in making small gardens, in which the boys used to dig "their own Borders, towards ye raising of Salads". For this purpose he had to buy seed out of his pocket-money, but was allowed to consume the produce of his garden at meal-times. From two o'clock the studies went on without intermission for four hours, until at six o'clock night prayers were said. These included among other devotions the Litany of the Saints and the Rosary. When this was over the tired boy went to his supper of bread and butter, or bread and cheese, and at half-past eight—or eight in winter—he was sent to bed. The regulations for his behaviour on other points besides the order of the day are curiously minute. If he was an untidy boy, he

<sup>1</sup> They have been printed in Mgr. Ward's *History of St. Edmund's College*, Appendix A, pp. 300-4.

was punished for leaving things about by having to forfeit a halfpenny to the poor. If he was idle, he lost his pocket-money, had to study in play-time or was served last at table. As a final resort the rod was kept in store for him, but this was to be used as little as possible. If he was diligent, he was given extra holidays or increased pocket-money. He received much training in deportment: he was never to give an answer "but with ye word Sir or Madam at ye end of it"; he was always to make his bow to the master or to visitors, and to remain bareheaded in their presence; he was bidden to sit upright at his studies, to walk "with his toes out," and to take pains not to grow awkward in his behaviour and carriage. If his clothes needed repair, he was not to wear his best suit for fear of accidents, but was to make shift with "a great Coat or Night Gown".

He enjoyed four holidays in the year, of which the longest was the summer holiday of four weeks beginning on Corpus Christi Day. At Christmas he had less than half this, for his vacation only began on Christmas Eve and ended on Twelfth Night—on which occasion he had the privilege of having plum cake for supper, provided he paid for it. On the same condition he was entitled to "Mince-Py" thrice between All Saints and Candlemas. Three days at Shrove-tide and a week at Easter completed his list of vacations. But he had two half-holidays every week and "extraordinary Recreation" whenever the head master thought proper.

The rules are marked throughout by kindly if quaint concern for the comfort of "ye children". They were only little boys and were treated as such, but judging by contemporary accounts of English school-life they were much better off in most respects than the boys of their own age, who then had to attend the great public-schools.

Dr. Challoner took a great interest in the school from the first and paid it several visits. He lived to see it moved first to Hare Street and then, in 1769, to Old Hall.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The old school buildings still exist at the back of the present college, and a loft is shown in which the hidden chapel is stated by tradition to have been. It has sometimes been asserted that Challoner himself has said Mass there. This may have been so, though as a matter of fact, there is no evidence that Challoner ever visited Old Hall. He was eighty years of age when the school

In 1749 Dr. Challoner undertook a second visitation of the district, as eight years had passed since he had visited the country missions. A comparison of the figures he has preserved with those of his first journey, show that though there was here and there an occasional increase of numbers, the general diminution both of missions and people steadily continued. He had visited Fawley and East Hendred in October, 1748, but apparently this was a chance visit to that neighbourhood, because, as previously, he reserved his journey for the summer months. His notes, no longer quite so methodical as before, show that he went through Hampshire, Sussex and Surrey. In Sussex all the missions of 1741 still existed, but with the exceptions of Arundel and Slindon they all showed reduced numbers. In Hampshire the number of missions had decreased. Twyford had been closed after the rising in 1745, and Padwell, Sherwell, Pennington and Avon are no longer mentioned, and had probably ceased to exist. The numbers for Winchester as well as for Langston and Havant showed a slight gain, but in all the others there was marked diminution. On the 23rd of July the bishop was at Winchester, but he seems to have worked his way back to London through Sussex, as four days later he was at Cowdray. He was in London again on the 12th of August as we learn from a letter to Bishop Dicconson of the Northern District,<sup>1</sup> who seems to have written with regard to one or two grievances, which are chiefly interesting as showing that the vicars apostolic had sent hurriedly a common letter to Rome intended to forestall the memorial which the Regulars were about to present. The somewhat cryptic character of the last paragraph is explained by the fact that Bishop Dicconson was in negotiations with Rome for a coadjutor. His *alias* was "Eaton," and the "Mr. Andrews" he had proposed was Rev. Francis Petre, who was known by his mother's name of Andrews, and who was, in the end, elected, his hunting proclivities notwithstanding.<sup>2</sup> The other two names suggested were those of Charles Howard and William

was moved there, and the journey there and back would have meant travelling fifty miles, so it is quite possible that he himself never saw it.

<sup>1</sup> Ushaw Collections, MSS., vol. ii.

<sup>2</sup> There is frequent confusion between him and his namesake, Rev. Francis Petre, Vice-President of Douay, 1730-62. The latter, however, was never on the mission.

Maire. "Mr. Edwards" here mentioned as favourable to Mr. Petre's election was no less a person than the Pretender—"King James III." himself.

"LONDON, *Aug.* 12, 1749.

"HOND. SIR,

"I was just returned from my visit in Hants, Sussex, and Surrey, when I had the favour of yours of the 6th instant. As to the affair of Mr. Dunn, I am sorry that my mentioning to you my desire of his stay, in case we could not otherwise provide for Lord Teynham, should have given any offense: I had no other motive or interest in it but the good of the common cause: nor had ever heard the least word of any proposals made by his friends of a place and pension for him in your parts; (in which case it would have been highly unreasonable to have desired his stay here) and so far from designing to act anything underhand in his regard, I actually advised him to go down into the North; and that the very night I came to Town, and before I had received your letter. As to Mr. Mason, I fear he is in no way fit for Lord T. nor indeed for any place in this district, and therefore I desire to be excused from accepting of him. As to our common letter, the only reason we did not wait for your subscription, was to hasten the despatch of it: It being represented to us as a thing that required expedition, the more because it was expected the Regulars would give in their memorials in the beginning of July, and it was proper, if possible, this letter should arrive before their memorials were given in. So that it was sent away in such haste that I had not time to take a fair copy of it; and have nothing of it by me but the first draught (which was altered in some things by Br. Stonor) which I will get Mr. Walton to write out for you. I understand by Mr. Kit that our letter came in good time and is like to be of service. This gentleman adds 'When I spoke to Mr. Edwards about Mr. Eaton's choice I took the liberty to read to him that paragraph of your letter in which you give Mr. Andrews the character he deserves: he seemed very well satisfied with it; and as to the affair of hunting, it did not make the least impression. I believe his promotion will meet with no difficulty from that quarter.' He adds that if you make a petition to the congre-



gation, he has reason to think that affair will be speedily terminated.

"I am,

"Hond. Sir,

"Ever yours,

"R. C.

"For Mr. Edward Dicconson, Senior, at Finch Mill in Shavington, near Wiggan, Lancashire."

In September he started again, going through Berkshire so far as the neighbourhood of Reading. Here at least there were no further losses, but every mission shows a slight gain.

Early in 1750 he was in Essex, but he has left no notes of his journey, and the only notice we have of it is in a letter to Bishop Hornyold, dated 10th February, 1750, in which he says he had returned the previous night from his "visits in Essex". The letter itself is of no special interest, as it is merely an acknowledgment of a payment made by Mrs. Giffard, then widely known as "the good Madam Giffard," and who is frequently praised in the bishop's letters for her charity. In this note he alludes to her failing health, with a quaint devotional conceit, "If her legs and her sight fail her, I make no question but that she employs so much the more the wings of the soul and her interior eyes, in the way of mental prayer and inward conversation with God".

This letter also furnishes one of the very rare allusions to the aged vicar apostolic, Dr. Petre, who was so well content to spend his peaceful old age in the background, leaving the administration of his district with full confidence to his co-adjutor. Here we are only told that "he holds it to a wonder". The aged bishop was already over seventy years of age, but he had yet before him nearly ten years of peaceful retirement in his Essex home. At the end of the year, writing to Mr. Hornyold, he says, "Mr. White [*i.e.* Bishop Petre] joins with me in the like wishes and prayer, not being well able to write himself, because of the shaking of his hand". He then, with a flash of reminiscence, adds, "I wish you also the like happiness and beg you would manage your health and always remember Bishop Giffard's motto *Moderata durant*".<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ushaw Collections, Letter, 20th Dec., 1750.

In the year 1750 London was visited with alarming earthquakes which gave Dr. Challoner occasion to issue in Bishop Petre's name a pastoral letter which none of his biographers have mentioned, and which has not hitherto been included in any list of his works. It is headed *Instructions and Advice to Catholicks upon occasion of the late Earthquakes. Printed in the Year 1750.*

The first shock was felt soon after midday on the 8th of February. Houses shook, chimneys were thrown down, and the oscillation was so serious that in Westminster Hall the judges and barristers fled from the courts, thinking that the building was about to fall upon them. The occurrence was generally regarded as a Divine warning against sin, and this view, zealously preached from the pulpits, was echoed by the press. The public, already genuinely alarmed, became absolutely terrified, when, a month later, there was a second and still more violent shock. This one occurred between five and six in the morning and was accompanied by vivid lightning. Bells were set ringing in the steeples, crockery was thrown to the ground and smashed in all directions, masses of stonework from the towers of Westminster Abbey fell crashing to the ground, while cries of panic were mingled with the terrified howling of the dogs.

The view that the earthquake was a judgment on the sins of London gained force when it was ascertained that it had not been felt in the country round; and soon a mysterious rumour spread to the effect that these shocks were but the forerunners of a greater catastrophe, the very date of which—the 8th of April—was specified, when the whole of London and Westminster were to be utterly destroyed.

Astonishing scenes of panic were witnessed as the fatal day approached. It is said that the greater part of the population spent the night of the 7th of April in the open air. Vast crowds took refuge in the fields, while others, thinking the river was safer, hired boats in which to spend the night; and this was done by so many that all the available boats were engaged. Many of the richer people sat all night in their coaches on the high-roads waiting for the disaster that never occurred. So all London lay in expectation until midday on the 8th, when, the morning being over, the tension relaxed, and the normal

way of life was resumed. As nothing further occurred the earthquakes were soon forgotten.

It was during the season of alarm that Bishop Petre issued the pastoral, which is certainly the composition of Dr. Challoner. He quotes Scripture and the Fathers to show that earthquakes may justly be regarded as indications of the wrath of God. He then continues: "We have, then, too much reason to apprehend that these late earthquakes are tokens that God is at present angry with us: and that the sword of His justice is actually hanging over our heads; and threatening us with the worst of His judgments. And what else, indeed, can any one expect, who seriously reflects on the multitude and enormity of the blasphemies, perjuries and other crying sins that are so common amongst all sorts of people . . . besides that general lewdness, injustice, profane swearing and other vices which everywhere reign, together with an utter contempt of all religion, and profanation of all that is sacred."

Catholics are called on to turn to God by prayer and penance, and the priests are ordered to insert the Collects against earthquakes in the Mass until the end of May, while the *Miserere* is to be sung in all the public chapels after Compline or Benediction on week-days.

The Visitation was not completed in this year, and it was not until the autumn of 1751 that Dr. Challoner made his way once more to Kent, and subsequently to Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire. In this instance it is more than usually difficult to follow the bishop's figures, as he has grouped the missions differently, and there is considerable variation in the names of the various centres. The total number of Catholics in each of the three counties would seem, however, to have been about the same as before.

During this same year, 1751, the bishop published two minor works, *Instructions and Meditations on the Jubilee*, and *Remarks on Two Letters against Popery*.

The former, which was published early in March, was a little volume which, owing to its necessarily ephemeral character, was not needed after the occasion for its use had passed away, so that copies are now very rarely to be met with. The previous year, 1750, had been proclaimed the year of Jubilee by Pope Benedict XIV., and in accordance with custom, dur-

ing a part of the ensuing year it was extended from Rome to the Universal Church. Thus in London the Jubilee was published on Mid-Lent Sunday, which fell that year on the 17th of March, and the bishop's little book was designed as an aid to fulfilling the conditions prescribed by the Holy See. It consists of an introduction, thirty meditations and some suitable prayers. In the introduction he explains the intention of the Church in instituting this form of Indulgence ; and enumerates the conditions laid down for gaining it. Of these conditions he lays greatest stress on the true inward penitence which is required from all who would benefit by this privilege. To help his flock to attain to this, he has written the meditations forming the body of the volume. Having next dwelt on the conditions of sacramental confession and holy communion, he then lays down the special regulations which the state of Catholicity in England rendered necessary with regard to the visits to certain churches, required by the fourth condition. It was hardly possible for any Catholics in the London district to visit four churches for fifteen days, so that this was commuted into visiting any one chapel, public or private, for fifteen days, continued or interrupted, and spending at each visit half an hour in prayer for the remission of sins and the intentions of the Pope.

The thirty meditations were chosen and arranged for the express purpose of "the present business of the jubilee [which] is a true and solid conversion of a sinner to God, in order to discharge him of his past debts and fix him in a new life".

It is impossible to read through these meditations without realising the burning zeal for souls that filled the writer's own heart. The never-ending struggle between good and evil, with its final issue for each individual soul, was so intensely real to him, and the presence of God was so actual a reality, that his words in direct exhortation take on a force and directness in marked contrast to his usual style. He discards his long periods, and writes, as though he were speaking, in short insistent phrases, questions, exclamations, direct exhortations. He hurries along within narrow limits as to space, emphasising with an almost oppressive wealth of epithets. There is a sense sometimes of spiritual exaltation, sometimes of personal pain in the hurrying sentences. In one passage he is con-

templating the loss of God, which is the chief horror of hell, and having spoken of God as the first beginning and last end even of the damned, he breaks out: "They have lost Him totally: they have lost Him irrecoverably: they have lost Him eternally. They have lost Him in Himself: they have lost Him in themselves: they have lost Him in all His creatures. The lively sense of this irreparable loss, and of all the consequences of it, continually racks their despairing souls: they cannot turn away their thought one moment from it: it grips them with inexpressible torments. Whichever way they turn to seek any one drop of ease or comfort, in Him or from Him, they meet with none: all things conspire against them: all things tell them they have lost their God."

The nervous energy of this passage, quoted here only as typical of many others, helps us to realise the living force of his spoken word; and even when he becomes more involved and less direct, the urgent personal appeal still makes itself felt, and explains why he became a great spiritual force among those with whom he came in daily contact. And when he comes to speak of God, though he has nothing to say that has not been said before, yet under all the phrases and exclamations there is the deep personal realisation that makes words which have almost become formulas through much repetition, live again with unexpected freshness. Occasionally a phrase leaps out from its surroundings. "His truth is infinitely charming," he breaks out in one place, where he is speaking of the perfections of God. There is self-revelation, too, in the little outburst: "What a joy it is to a true lover of God, to think that whatsoever may come to himself or to anything in the world, his Love at least, Whom he loves without comparison more than himself and all things else, will always be infinitely glorious, infinitely rich and infinitely happy!"

The character of these meditations has been dwelt on at some greater length than the little book itself might seem to warrant, because they do not stand alone, but are related both to the former volume, *Think Well On't*, published so many years before at Douay, and to the larger and well-known book of Meditations which he was already engaged on, and which were published two years later. Nearly all, in fact, of these thirty meditations are found in substance if not word for word



in the *Meditations for every day of the Year*; while some of them reproduce again passages from *Think Well On't*, and others are abbreviated from that work.

The Meditations are followed by two prayers, one for the remission of sin and the other for the general intentions of the Jubilee. These may be translations from some foreign language, though they have more the appearance of original compositions. They fitly conclude the little book which was a work quite after the bishop's own heart.

The full title of the second work which he published during 1751 was, *Remarks on Two Letters against Popery pretended to be written by a Protestant Lady and first published in the year 1727, upon the recommendation of Dr. Samuel Clarke. In a Letter to a friend.*

From the introductory note we learn that this little tract had been written many years previously at the request of a friend "for the satisfaction of one of his own family" and with no thought of publication. "But the writer, being lately informed that the pamphlet on which he had made these remarks was to this day cried up for an unanswerable piece, believed it would not be improper to publish to the world his thoughts on that performance."

Early in 1751 Dr. Stonor of the Midland District, feeling the burden of advancing age, decided to petition for a coadjutor. His choice fell on Dr. Challoner's friend, the Rev. John Hornyold, of the ancient family of Blackmore Park, Worcestershire, a priest known for his piety and solid learning. His work on the Ten Commandments became very popular, and Bishop Milner says that it "was so generally approved of, that he received something like official thanks from Oxford for the publication". Dr. Hornyold had frequently suffered from the penal laws and several attempts were made to arrest him. On one occasion he lay hid in one of the barns at Longbirch, and when, at another time, the constables came to seize him as he was saying Mass, he had only just time to exchange his wig for a woman's cap, and to fling a cloak over his vestments before they burst in. Dropping on his knees among the other persons present, he escaped detection.

He had made the most of his Douay training and consequently was well-grounded in self-distrust and humility, so that



BISHOP HORNVOLD.



he took alarm at the threatened promotion and wrote anxiously to Dr. Challoner for counsel. This he received in a letter dated 30th April, 1751.<sup>1</sup>

"April 30, 1751.

"DEAR SIR

"I have yours of ye 26th instant. As to the promotion you speak of, were you ambitious of it, I should then conclude you unworthy of it, I am much better pleased to find you are afraid of it, but still disposed to acquiesce to God's holy will. He often makes choice of those who seem to themselves the most unfit, for the greatest achievements & chuses such as the world despises to confound the pride of the world. Take care, dear Sir, to be humble and you have nothing to fear. As to my part I am too far engaged already in the cause to go back. And I hope you will never give me occasion to repent. I am, Dear Sir, Ever yours in Christ

"J. FISHER.

"Mr. White joins with me in presenting his respects to good Mrs. Giffard.

"For Mr. Hornyold at Longbirch near Wolverhampton, Staffordshire."

The result of this advice was to allay Mr. Hornyold's scruples, and by the end of the year his appointment was practically settled. On the 24th of December, 1751, the bishop wrote to him a letter from which an extract has already been given, but which is here reprinted in entirety.<sup>2</sup>

"Dec. 24, 1751.

"HD. SIR,

"This acknowledges the favour of yours of ye 20th instant, with the enclosed bill of Mrs. Giffard's charity. Mr. White, whose shaking hand disables him in a great measure from writing, desires to join with me in our sincere respects and best wishes of a happy new year and many such both to the good lady and yourself. It is a satisfaction to me to hear that your affair is near a conclusion : and the less hand you have had in it and the more you are afraid of it the better I like it. As to your objection of the small respect shewed by the Cl[ergy]

<sup>1</sup> Ushaw Archives, *Hornyold Papers*.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid*.

to those in that station: this may help to qualify any fumes that might otherwise arise, and endanger our heads and another evil. But after all, prelacy in our circumstances has nothing in it to be coveted but the benefit of more labour and trouble and the opportunity of serving a greater number. That we may succeed in this we must set out with an entire distrust in ourselves and an invincible confidence in Him who is the strong support of the humble. In Him I am,

“Ever yours

“J. FISHER.

“For Mr. Hornyold, with Mrs. Giffard at Longbitch, near Wolverhampton, Staffordshire.”

The consecration of Mr. Hornyold took place on the 10th of February, 1752, and was marked by a curious incident. Bishop Stonor, who was the consecrating prelate, performing for the first time an unusual ceremony, omitted the formal handing of the crozier to the bishop-elect at that part of the office in which all the pontifical insignia are solemnly bestowed. No one at the time seems to have noticed the omission, but subsequently the question was raised as to whether the bestowal of the crozier was not an essential feature of the rite, being in effect part of the “conferring of the instruments”.

The new bishop would not exercise his functions until this point was cleared up. Rome was consulted and answered that there was no need of a fresh consecration, but that the part of the rite omitted should be supplied. This was done: but even so Dr. Hornyold appeared to have been still uneasy, for later in the year we find the following letter to him, in which Challoner, in cautiously veiled language, advises him not to trouble further on the subject.<sup>1</sup>

“Aug. 4, 1752.

“HOND. DEAR SIR,

“I received yours with the 30<sup>th</sup> note of Mrs. Giffard's charity: to whom I beg you will present Mr. White's and my best wish for time and eternity. As to the case, I think you have done abundantly enough and therefore I advise you to be easy and neither to say nor think any more about it. As to

<sup>1</sup> Ushaw Archives, *Hornyold Papers*.



the points, which 'tis pretended should have been expressed 'tis visibly there is nothing in them that could make any difference in the case. And that which was omitted has now been supplied and therefore all must now be right. Mr. Walton is of the same opinion, who is much yours. I am Hd. dear Sir,

“Your affectionate humble servant,

“J. FISHER.

“To Mr. Hornyold, at Longbirch, near Wolverhampton, Staffordshire.”

This letter was apparently successful in its object as the matter is not mentioned again. The friendship between the two bishops continued without interruption till Dr. Hornyold's death in 1778, just two years before Dr. Challoner himself died.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE SETTLEMENT BETWEEN THE VICARS APOSTOLIC AND THE REGULARS.

1753.

THE year 1753 brought with it the long-desired settlement of the controversy between the vicars apostolic and the regulars. In a previous chapter we have seen that the decree of 1745, published in 1748, had decided the chief questions at issue, the power of the bishops to control the activity of the regulars, both with regard to granting approbation for hearing confessions and administering sacraments, and also as to regulating and defining their sphere of labour, so as to prevent them clashing with the seculars to the detriment of both sections of the clergy and their work. The settlement effected by Rome was in favour of episcopal authority. The regular clergy duly announced their submission, but did not conceal their dissatisfaction with the decision. From the time of publication they began an agitation with the view of obtaining the recall or at least the modification of the decree. The beginnings of this movement and its progress during 1748 have already been recorded. It remains briefly to describe the final settlement of these wearisome contentions.

We have seen that the three secular vicars apostolic in 1749 addressed a joint letter to the cardinals of Propaganda urgently desiring them to uphold the decrees. As against this, the Vicar Apostolic of the Western District, Bishop Prichard, and his coadjutor, Bishop York, the one a Franciscan, the other a Benedictine, wrote to Rome against the decrees, but without obtaining any answer.<sup>1</sup> Definite action was however taken by the Pope, who appointed a special commission

<sup>1</sup> See the document issued by the regulars, *Facti*, cited hereunder, p. 23.

selected from the cardinals of Propaganda to consider the respective statements put forward by both parties.<sup>1</sup>

There followed representations and counter-representations. Each party was in the dark as to what its opponents were doing in Rome, and neither seemed very sure as to what headway they themselves were making. The regulars appear on the whole to have been confident of ultimate success. By 1751 their case was complete, and it would seem that there was complete and cordial co-operation between the different orders, for they made common cause, and their printed pleadings laid before the Commission were put forward on behalf of all the regulars. In this printed statement, which consisted of two parts the [*Relatio*] *Facti* and the *Summarium*, their whole case, with all its ramifications, is in a sense crystallised, taking solid shape, clear of all the rumour and hearsay which till this time surrounded it. From the Latin title<sup>2</sup> we learn that it is presented to the Pope and the particular Congregation appointed by him, on behalf of the superiors of the regulars and their subjects. It was written and presented by the Roman *avvocato*, Domenico Spinelli.

After a lengthy introduction of fifty-one sections describing in detail the history of the Church in England from the outbreak of the Reformation, and the various forms of ecclesiastical government that had been devised to meet the situation, Spinelli sets forth in six concise articles the objections of the regulars to the decree.

The first article alleges that the decree is inequitable as having been obtained surreptitiously. The second states that it is not feasible in practice, especially in so far as it obliges regulars to receive their faculties from the vicars apostolic and subjects them to examination by the latter. The third is intended to show the impracticable nature of that portion of the decree which grants to the vicars apostolic the power of partially or entirely suspending regulars. The fourth article argues that the decree is also unworkable in so far as it gives the vicars apostolic the power of correcting regulars as to

<sup>1</sup> See *Regulæ Observandæ*, 1753, pp. 4-5.

<sup>2</sup> *Sanctiss. D. Nostro Benedicto XIV una cum Congregatione Particulari per SS. deputata Anglicana Missionum. Pro Superioribus Regularibus Missionum ac eorum Missionariis. Facti*, p. 59. *Summarium*, p. 182.

morals, and of ordering them not to desert the Catholics committed to their care, or to go beyond the districts assigned to them without episcopal leave. The fifth article deals with certain minor grievances, while the sixth and last urges that the grounds on which the decree is alleged to have been obtained are lacking all foundation.

The second part of the document—the *Summarium*—contains a valuable collection of documents, including bulls, briefs, and even private letters.

The arguments, some of which occupy several sections, by which the six articles are supported, are both long and technical, and it will be sufficient here to have indicated their general trend. But one or two special points of interest may be noted, as throwing additional light on the history of the foregoing struggle. Thus it is stated that the provincial of the Franciscans, on hearing of the decree, formally applied to the vicars apostolic that the publication and execution of the decree might be deferred until the regulars could lay their case before the Holy See; but this request, it is added, was refused by the bishops in terms that were scarcely courteous.

In another part we get a clear statement of the view the regulars took of the decree of Innocent XII., dated 6th October, 1695. This decree was the greatest obstacle they had to encounter, for it definitely declared, first, that the jurisdiction of all chapters, both secular and regular, was suppressed, and, secondly, that the regulars were subjected to the vicars apostolic as to approbation, both for the cure of souls and the administration of the Sacraments. The seculars considered that this decree alone settled the entire question. From the document before us we learn that the defence of the regulars was twofold, first that the decree was obtained secretly, and next that the vicars apostolic had never published it in England or put it into execution.

Lastly we may notice a case, quoted as an instance to show how detrimental to souls was the view taken by the seculars, as to the necessity of the episcopal approbation for validly administering the Sacrament of Penance. A convert, it is stated, lay dying, and a secular priest was called in to give him the last sacraments in the absence of the regular who had usually attended him. This priest represented to the sick man the possibility of his previous confessions being invalid, should his

former confessor have failed to secure approbation from the bishop. This was too much for the dying man, who exclaimed, "Is it so, then, that there are schisms and dissensions among you as to the validity of your absolutions? I will believe neither the Regular nor you; but I will die a member of the Protestant Church." And so abjuring the Faith, he died.

That similar cases, less extreme, perhaps, but none the less provocative of scandal and disedification, should be of common occurrence, is only natural when we remember that the dispute turned on a matter of such vital moment to priests and people alike. It was indeed ample time that the question should be settled once and for all by the authority of the Holy See.

The objections thus formulated by Spinelli were duly submitted to the Pope and the special Congregation of Cardinals, and copies were furnished to the vicars apostolic. A long and detailed reply dated 17th September, 1751, or at least materials for such a reply to be drawn by their advocate in Rome, was immediately drafted by Dr. Challoner.<sup>1</sup> It is written with considerable vigour, and on several points he directly joins issue, meeting certain statements with flat contradiction. One by one, he considers the six articles and the arguments alleged in support.

On the point that the decree was obtained surreptitiously, the bishop, while denying the fact, urges that to make such a statement is to accuse the Congregation of Propaganda rather than the bishops. The technical points of constitutional law he meets with technical arguments, and alleged facts are dealt with by summary contradiction: "The things which are added in the third place," he says, "are either false or irrelevant to the cause. The authority, which the Superiors of the Regulars formerly exercised in this mission, is nothing to the purpose. That the status of the mission is the same as it was before the appointment of Vicars-Apostolic, is clearly false. It is also false that the decree of Innocent XII. either was obtained by trickery, or could not be published and put into execution." And he proceeds to argue that whatever rights of exemption the regulars claimed in theory, at least in practice they had presented themselves for approbation, and to this extent obeyed the decree of Pope Innocent.

To the second article, which argued at great length that

<sup>1</sup> Original draft in the Westminster Archives.



the decree was unworkable so far as it bound regulars to receive faculties from the bishops, he makes equally long reply. They allege, he says, no reason to prove this impracticability. And he takes their points one after another. In the event the subsequent decision upheld his point of view in all cases except one. In this the Pope seemed to think there was some solid ground for believing that regulars, otherwise suitable, might be deterred from coming to labour on the English mission by fear of an examination in theology at the hands of the bishops. Though Dr. Challoner had taken the opposite view, this proved to be one point in which the decree, as will be seen, met the objection of the regulars. In any case he again meets by flat denial one of the examples cited by the other side. "Certainly that story which it is pretended was heard by someone or other, about two of the vicars apostolic refusing to grant a dispensation to certain people of high rank, to contract marriage within the second degree of consanguinity, unless they dismissed their regular chaplains and received seculars instead, is utterly false, and has not even the least verisimilitude about it."

His main argument against the third article,—the objection the regulars felt to the vicars apostolic having power to suspend them,—was that this would not be harmful to the orders, as there was no probability that the regulars would conduct themselves in such a way as to be suspended in large numbers. And he cites the regulars' own assertions of their good behaviour, as well as the testimony of the vicars apostolic to the same effect, as conclusive proof of this.

With regard to the objection in the fourth article, concerning the power of the bishops to correct regulars on points of morals, he replies that they do not prove their statement that this is unfeasible; and that, moreover, if there is involved in this any derogation to their privileges, there is very grave reason for it. As the regulars in England have to dwell outside their religious houses, and often at a distance from their superiors, very grave scandals might easily arise and spread if the vicars apostolic could not correct them on points of morals. The next part of this fourth article he argues at some length, for it involved one of the crucial points in the dispute. It concerned the power given to the vicar apostolic of forbidding the regulars to leave the Catholics committed to them

without permission, or to go beyond the limits assigned to them. The regulars urged that if these powers were enforced, they would result in depriving the laity of their right to keep what chaplains they preferred, or to dismiss them at pleasure. Moreover, they pleaded that it would clash with the character of monastic life, and prejudice the right which regulars possessed of electing their superiors. It seemed also to introduce the institution of parishes, an advance which they considered was incompatible with the existing circumstances of the mission, and which would operate in the direction of depriving the faithful of their right to select their confessors.

Dr. Challoner denied that all of these consequences would follow. In the first place, he pointed out that the power in question would not affect the patron's right of dismissal, because any chaplain who was dismissed could not be said to have "abandoned" his congregation, and so would not come under the clause. Nor would it clash with monastic discipline, since it would not hinder the regulars from electing their own superiors, or recalling their own subjects from the mission, but it would only prevent them while engaged in the service of the mission from abandoning, neglecting or driving from them any part of the Catholics who were accustomed to belong to their flock, "which," he adds grimly, "at different times has been habitually done". Finally he argues that priests could be restricted within certain limits, and prevented from interfering with the harvest of others, without either the institution of parishes or the infliction of any hardship on the laity.

The minor objections taken in the fifth article are taken one by one by the bishop on their merits. One of these amounted to a charge of neglect against Bishop Petre for not taking notice of the publication of unorthodox writing by a priest named Locke. This charge Dr. Challoner repels with warmth as "most false". "For," he says, "he was immediately cited by the Bishop of Prusa and shortly afterwards was suspended, that is, as soon as it was certain that he was the writer of those books, which at first he denied. But inasmuch as this was notorious, so much so that the writer immediately on his suspension openly left the Church, it is astonishing with what face Religious men could bring before the Holy See such an atrocious calumny."

Another charge, contained in the sixth article, also

directed against his bishop, and indirectly against himself, stirs him from his habitual calm, and causes him to speak with more vehemence than was usual with him: "It is also utterly false, which in the Sixth Article is alleged against the same Bishop, that by his neglect, there are in the county of Hants very many people of forty, and others who have been converted for ten or twelve years, yet have not received the Sacrament of Confirmation. It is utterly false, I say, since all the congregations of that county he visited by his Coadjutor in the year 1741, and administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to all who had not been previously confirmed, and he did the same again after the late troubles, throughout the same county in the year 1749."

In face of the bishop's statement, supported by external evidence, that there had been two episcopal visitations of Hampshire, within ten years, this allegation, however it came to be made, seems singularly misleading, and deserving of the stern refutation it here received.

He concludes his statement by remarking that the rest of the sixth article is taken up by hypothetical confutation of the points which the regulars supposed the vicars apostolic had alleged against them. These matters, he says, were either of no importance or had been already refuted: "But that which they assert in the last place is also most false, that is to say that the Decree of Innocent XII. was not published, nor received in use, nor put into execution, or that it was obtained in clandestine manner without the Regulars being heard, at least the Benedictines, who, it is clear from the very words of the decree, were heard".

And so ends this document, so unlike the bishop's usual manner of writing, in its downright and indignant utterance. It is clear, from the terms he makes use of, that he was profoundly moved by the conviction, that, in good faith or bad faith, statements had been made which were contrary to the facts as he knew them. Point after point he stigmatises them as "false" or "most false," and, as we have seen, he does not shrink from branding one allegation as "an atrocious calumny".

On the other hand it cannot easily be supposed that the representatives of so many illustrious orders would make such statements unless they believed them to be true. Yet the

fact remains that where a clear and definite issue is raised, which can be tested by evidence at the present day—such as the Locke case and the Hampshire visitation—Dr. Challoner proves always in the right. Possibly the explanation lies in the common experience that when men are deeply moved or their dearest interests are at stake, they readily accept haphazard statements without that careful investigation which is necessary to winnow the wheat from the chaff in all human evidence.

Whether Bishop Challoner's "Observations" were adopted on behalf of all three secular vicars apostolic, or whether they merely represented the views of the London District, we have no means of knowing. In either case they may be taken as summing up effectively the secular side of the contention.

The Holy See had now before it the full pleadings of each party in this difficult controversy, complicated as it was with points of law and questions of fact, all equally in dispute, and with a background of strong personal feeling and prejudice. The important points at issue imperatively called for a definite and final settlement. The Pope and his special Congregation of Cardinals, with that prudent wisdom of Rome, which refuses to be hurried into hasty ill-considered decisions, took nearly two years to study the question in all its bearings, and then, after this mature and prolonged consideration, issued in calm, judicial fashion the final award.

The document, sometimes known as the *Regulæ Observandæ in Anglicanis Missionibus*,<sup>1</sup> sometimes quoted under its opening words *Apostolicum Ministerium*, issued from St. Mary Major's "under the ring of the Fisherman" on the 30th of May, 1753, ended the long strife once for all. From that time till the Restoration of the Hierarchy, nearly a century later, the "Rules of the Mission" remained the chief constitutional regulations for the Church in England, and the gradual cessation of the ancient differences, and absence of very serious difficulties during that period is sufficient testimony to the large wisdom and statesmanship with which Benedict XIV. solved the problem. Nor must it be forgotten in considering the

<sup>1</sup> *Regulæ Observandæ in Anglicanis Missionibus ab Apostolicis Vicariis, nec non a Sacerdotibus Missionariis Sæcularibus ac Regularibus*, Romæ, MDCCLIII. Typis Sacræ Congreg. de Propag. Fide.



terms of the document, that the Pope himself was one of the most learned canonists of his age.

As issued from the Propaganda Press, the important publication is a little paper-covered pamphlet of forty-seven pages, clearly if closely printed. It is addressed to "Our Venerable Brethren the Bishops, Vicars-Apostolic, and our beloved sons the Priests, both Secular and Regular of every Order, and of the Institute of the Society of Jesus, Missionaries Apostolic of the English Missions". The document itself is formal and technical in style, grave and judicial in tone, inspired throughout by firm authority, and lofty confidence in the power of the principles it enunciates to secure a final and lasting peace.

In the introduction the Pope speaks first of his grief at the continued dissensions in England, and of his determination to remove them and to provide a remedy. He states that he has personally considered the allegations made on both sides, and he has also caused them to be examined by certain cardinals of Propaganda with whom he has held consultations. The result of these investigations are the provisions now published, which he orders and commands to be strictly observed.

And first of all (No. 1) nothing is to be changed with regard to the office and jurisdiction of the vicars apostolic. Having laid this down as a preliminary principle, the Pope goes to the root of the matter, and insists that every provision possible be made to secure the requisite holiness of life in all future priests secular or regular. Accordingly he devotes the second section to a consideration of the secular Colleges, and the third section to instructions to the superiors of the regulars. As to the colleges for the secular clergy (No. 2) he insists that no pains are to be spared in fitting the students for their future career in holiness, talent, and learning; and he proceeds to consider them in detail. Douay has rendered a satisfactory account of the system there in force: the Roman College is put under special charge of Cardinal Monti, who is appointed Protector *pro tempore* with instructions to see that the regulations of Clement XII., issued in 1739, are carried out; as to Lisbon, Paris, Seville and Valladolid, sufficient information is not forthcoming, and Propaganda is directed to issue letters to the Nuncios of Portugal, France and Spain, ordering inquiry to be made forthwith into the state of these colleges.





POPE BENEDICT XIV.



With regard to the preparation of regulars, the superiors are directed (No. 3) to choose as missionaries only those of great piety, who are also gifted with the qualifications for such special work. None are to be sent on the mission in future except those who are attached to the various embassy chapels, or who are chosen to live as chaplains to gentlemen of position or in places specially founded for regulars. Other regulars must understand that they are excluded from the English mission; although those who are already there are to be under no obligation of returning. With regard to Irish priests the Pope declares it is more fitting for them to labour in their own country, and they should only be chosen as missionaries in England when there is scarcity of priests and when they are selected and summoned for that purpose by the vicars apostolic of England.

Having thus provided for the future, the Pope turns to the present, and defines in general terms the authority of the vicars apostolic (No. 4), which is declared sufficient to ensure ample obedience and subordination. They have all that authority in their respective districts which every ordinary has in his cathedral city and diocese, besides certain special faculties. But (No. 5), inasmuch as regulars have the privilege of being exempt from the authority of the bishop or ordinary, and of being immediately subject to the jurisdiction of the Holy See, it is necessary to place some limit to these privileges, lest disputes should hereafter arise.

And first (No. 6), when a regular missionary arrives in the district where his work lies, he will visit the vicar apostolic as has always been done, and produce his credentials to the bishop, vicar general or vicar foran. Moreover (No. 7), just as no secular priest can administer the sacrament of penance unless he is a parish priest or has been pronounced fit by the ordinary after examination, so according to the decrees of Trent and former pontifical constitutions, the same rule holds good with regard to regulars who wish to hear confessions of the laity. Therefore (No. 8), the bishop may impose this examination on all priests, both secular and regular, who are to administer the sacrament of penance, and this the Pope repeats with emphasis, "The ordinary, I say, may call the regulars to examination if they wish to hear the confessions of seculars".

But having laid this down definitely, he proceeds to afford the regulars protection against any possible prejudice at the hands of the vicars apostolic, or such hardship as they had feared and alleged in their pleadings. They are, therefore, given the right to present themselves for examination, before they leave for the mission, to the ordinary of the place where their monastery is, and to obtain from him, if they are duly qualified, testimonials as to their fitness. And they are given the further alternative of examination by the apostolic nuncio at Brussels, if they prefer this course. Such testimonials, when presented by any regular, are to be accepted by the vicars apostolic as sufficient evidence of his fitness without further examination. By this plan the regulars are assured of an impartial examination, while the right of the vicar apostolic to grant approbation is respected.

This visit of the regular to the vicar apostolic to present his certificate of fitness is not to be regarded as a mere act of courtesy or visit of ceremony (No. 9); but the vicar apostolic also must understand that in such case suitable faculties are to be granted. Such faculties may be granted without a fixed period of time or other limitation, but if faculties are in fact conferred for a definite period, at the expiry of the appointed time the ordinary has the right either of abrogating them or of compelling the priest to undergo further examination. Faculties unlimited in time cease only with the office held, and cannot be suspended without a new cause which directly regards confession. To avoid all difficulties on this head, the Pope appoints that every vicar apostolic may grant to all approved regulars faculties for a period of six years, which may be confirmed for a further period of six years without previous examination, provided the missionary has complied with other provisions of these rules. Moreover (No. 10), no one is hereafter to appeal to the brief of Urban VIII., *Britannia*, or to his Bull *Plantata*, or any other document supporting the independence of the regulars in the matter of administering the sacrament of penance, all of which were issued before the appointment of vicars apostolic, and had been supplanted by the enactments of Innocent XII. By the establishment of ordinary episcopal authority, all immunity of the regulars, obtained in times when there was no free exercise of such authority, ceases.

And this point is dwelt on at considerable length, and established in the light of various decisions at law.

The authority of the vicar apostolic is next carefully described in very technical terms (No. 11), particularly with reference to general faculties which he grants as Delegate of the Holy See. The spirit in which he should approach these duties is traced, insistence is laid on the fact that with regard to special faculties he is not bound to grant them, and need only do so when and how it seems to him proper. The principle is asserted that large discretion must be allowed to him, especially as he has of necessity an intimate knowledge both of the local necessities and of the persons concerned. Special mention is made of faculties for celebrating Mass twice in one day. This is only to be granted where the number of the faithful renders the second Mass necessary; and it is stated to be an intolerable abuse, if faculties were to be granted to a priest to celebrate Mass twice in a day, simply that he might live more easily by obtaining a double stipend; and the sin of the priest is still more grave if he should celebrate in this way without leave of the vicar apostolic, or if he should obtain such leave by representing that the privilege was necessary for the sake of the people, while in reality he desires it through greed for alms.

The Pope next declares (No. 12) that in all these matters regulars equally with seculars are subject to the jurisdiction and correction of the vicar apostolic; and this is explained and developed from the point of view of Canon Law in the next two sections (Nos. 13 and 14).

The case of the correction of refractory regulars is next considered. It is pointed out (No. 15) that if the irregularities in question concern merely the rules of the Order, the bishop is in no way concerned, but the matter pertains to the superior. If the offence is such as to cause public scandal, and the bishop insists that effective notice should be taken, the offender must be dealt with by his own superior, who must report to the bishop the punishment inflicted.

In the next section (No. 16) the Pope expresses his conviction that with the guidance of these rules, which are neither arbitrary nor newly invented, but based on Canon Law and the Tridentine Decrees, and confirmed by Pontifical Constitu-



tions, a perfect agreement can be arrived at between the bishops and the regulars, provided there is a real desire of peace and concord. This may be hoped for, now that definite limits have been laid down with regard to their rights. He points out how the superiors have the right of removing and, if necessary, of punishing those subjects who fail in the observance of their rule. And if this right is exercised, the vicar apostolic has no right of complaint; and he can do nothing unless the superior fails to act or inflicts an inadequate penalty. At the same time the vicars apostolic as delegates of the Holy See have power over the regulars in all that relates to the cure of souls and the administration of the sacraments: though this right belongs also to the Superior who may punish their subjects for negligence in the cure of souls and administration of the Sacraments. Moreover, the right of the bishop extends only to those acts which he himself by reason of his office is bound to perform for the good of the people entrusted to the regular as parish priest.

Seeing that under these circumstances both the vicar apostolic and the superior have jurisdiction over those regulars who are entrusted with the cure of souls, the Pope decrees (No. 17) that to prevent disputes, the opinion of the bishop is to be followed rather than that of the superior, if they clash. Further, that the superior may withdraw his subjects from pastoral work, if he so desires, without informing the bishop of the cause; and the bishop, in his turn, may act in the same way, without disclosing the cause to the superior. Moreover, a regular, who is suspended from his office or removed in any way, may not delay the execution of the order under cover of an appeal, but he must first obey the order, and then conduct his defence before the proper judge.

The Pope next proceeds to lay down some short rules to guide both the vicars apostolic and the superiors of the regulars in the government of their subjects. The former are enjoined (No. 18) to see that the secular missionaries are edifying in all respects, careful in their duties and strict in avoiding useless public assemblies and especially taverns. They are to suspend priests who refuse to avoid the latter. In particular they are to be severe with regard to those who speak of the

Government without due respect. For priests dwell in England not to foster rumours and disturbances, but to promote the Catholic religion, and to receive those who wish to embrace it. On the latter point they are to abstain from hasty and ill-considered conversions which do more harm than good. With regard to their regular clergy the vicars apostolic are to correct similar abuses by the means above explained, and sanctioned by the Council of Trent in the case of regulars dwelling in monasteries, but committing scandals outside their limits.

The superiors of the regulars are warned (No. 19) to choose their missionaries carefully and with regard to their fitness for this special work. They are to appoint a visitor who shall interview each of their subjects every year, and inquire into their way of life and their use of the alms entrusted to them. This visitor shall confer with the vicar apostolic as to the means which are to be taken to prevent the growth of scandals of any kind.

In the next place (No. 20) the Holy Father issued directions of a character which afterwards caused some further trouble, as the regulars represented that they were impracticable and likely to damage their missions and hinder their work. As subsequent events occurred which will make it necessary for us to revert to this subject, it will be useful to give this section of the rules with greater fulness, especially, as though important, it is not long. "Since Regulars in England dwell outside monasteries, in private houses, wear secular dress and enjoy a liberty which they would not have in their Monasteries, it would not be altogether an unheard-of thing, if even religious hearts were soiled with the dust of the world. Therefore it is enjoined on all Missioners that after six years they shall return to a Catholic country, and there resume their religious habit and dwell for three months in a Monastery of their Order, and during this time make a Retreat of fifteen days. Wherefore the Vicars Apostolic, to whose judgment and prudence is entrusted the power of granting faculties *formulae secundæ* to missioners, ought not to prolong them beyond a period of six years but grant them at the utmost for six years, and even during that time at their discretion—and then restore them, if they think fit when the Regular

shall return to the mission, on the completion of the time of his prescribed withdrawal.”<sup>1</sup>

The bishops and the superiors are next exhorted to act together (No. 21), so that, though they are not bound to disclose to one another their respective grounds for dispensing with the services of any missionary, it would be fitting for them to consult one another and to co-operate lest the interests of the mission should suffer.

Concerning foundations nothing is to be changed (No. 22); both seculars and regulars will continue in possession of what they at present hold. In towns the sacraments may be administered by either to all comers; but in the country parts they must not administer sacraments outside the limits prescribed to them, and even within these limits the licence of the vicar apostolic of the district is absolutely necessary. Yet the vicars apostolic are desired to be liberal in granting faculties, at least for sometimes hearing confessions out of these limits, for occasionally this is very convenient.

Certain regulations are laid down with regard to indulgences (No. 23), and whereas the indulgences annexed to certain works by way of privileges to various religious orders are suspended, power is granted to each vicar apostolic to publish a plenary indulgence four times a year on such days as may seem to him suitable.

Finally (No. 24), having thus counselled the superiors of the clergy, the Pope turns to the laity, and addressing in particular the ambassadors and ministers of the Catholic Powers, and the Catholics who support the missions, he exhorts them to allow only such priests, whether secular or regular, to officiate in their chapels as have produced to them their credentials from the vicar apostolic. For, otherwise, he points out they may be imposed on by those who are not really priests, or who, if they are priests indeed, may yet be suspended or irregular.

In conclusion, the Pope confirms all the contents of his pronouncement by the apostolic authority, and enjoins strict obedience to its provisions, in spite of previous decisions or

<sup>1</sup> In this section the Pope is treating, not of simple Confession faculties, but of the extra powers (such as duplication or certain dispensations) granted in Form II. (section 11). These the Vicar Apostolic was to grant to Regulars, at most *ad sexennium*, and nevertheless he was free to revoke them even before the expiration of the six years.

privileges in any contrary sense, and he ends with the prayer "that you, Venerable Brethren, and Beloved Sons, through the charity of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has redeemed our souls with His Precious Blood, may perform your duty, not in strife and jealousy, but putting on the Lord Jesus Christ". And he blesses them with the Apostolic Benediction.

In the providence of God, this weighty judgment did not fail in its object, and ultimately it was the means of restoring peace to the Church in this land. Naturally this happy result took time to attain, and there was need for further briefs and letters, elucidating or confirming minor points; but finally all obstacles were overcome, the root of the trouble was removed, the cure was complete and time healed all.

The vicars apostolic naturally welcomed the decree as giving them all they had asked for.<sup>1</sup> The only point on which they sought further information, was as to whether the power of granting a plenary indulgence four times a year was in addition to, or in substitution for, the power they had under their faculties of granting one three times a year. This point was settled on the 3rd of October, by a letter from Propaganda, explaining that it was in addition to their former power.

The publication of the decree was undertaken by the vicars apostolic immediately on its arrival, each of them issuing a mandate for his own district. The decree was accepted loyally by the regulars, though in one or two cases there seem to have been refusals to receive them except through their own superiors.<sup>2</sup>

In November Bishop Challoner was able to write to his agent in Rome:<sup>3</sup> "As to the regulations, they meet with no opposition: all seems perfectly calm and quiet. However 'tis thought that after Mr. Abraham's [the Pope's] death, applications will be made to his successor for qualifying them with regard to the sexennium at least and perhaps some other

<sup>1</sup> The draft of Bishop Challoner's letter of thanks to Cardinal Valenti, Prefect of Propaganda, 16th Aug., 1753, is in his "Letter-Book" (p. 30), Westminster Archives.

<sup>2</sup> Letter by Alban Butler to Bishop Hornyold, 23rd Dec., 1753, Westminster Archives, 1751-55. Letter by Bishop Challoner to Propaganda, 25th Oct., 1753, Propaganda Archives, *Anglia*, vol. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Dr. C. Stonor, 15th Nov., 1753, Westminster Archives, *Epp. Var.*, xiii., 102.



points. The provincials of the Jesuits and Benedictines have testified to us in writing the acceptance of them and theirs ; but at the same time have complained (perhaps with a view of intimating that the *Regulæ* were obtained by calumny and misrepresentation) that the Regulars in general have been accused to Mr. Abraham 'as if superiors tolerated the greatest excesses in their subjects, refusing to correct them, though admonished by their respective Apostolical Vicars, as if they were neglectful of the duties incumbent in each station and on all occasions, opposing and obstructing the wholesome regulations made for the right ordering this mission' (Carteret, Nov. 1). And therefore they request of Mr. White [Bishop Petre] and me that we would give testimony to the innocence of their people, respectively, as to these imputations. Mr. Carteret<sup>1</sup> tells me they had this account from F. Felix,<sup>2</sup> to whom Mr. Abraham in his last audience objected these kinds of misdemeanours to the Regulars in general : and he supposes the accusation to have been laid at their doors by Signor Nicolini, who was sometime here. But the monks impute it, in their letter, to some of those who *præfatum decretum (anni 1745) sollicitaverant*. As to our parts as we have had no grounds, for these many years, of complaints against either the Jesuits or Benedictines in our district, in any of these particulars, we cannot, I think, refuse them the testimony they desire of us."

The testimonial to the Jesuits was given on the 31st of December, 1753, and has been printed more than once.<sup>3</sup> After recalling the circumstances that made such a testimony desirable, the bishop continues, "generally speaking, for the time since I have had anything to do with this mission, I have found those of the Society, both superiors and inferiors, as regular in their conduct and as diligent in their respective stations as those of any other denomination whatsoever. Secondly, as to their behaviour in our regard, I have never found any of them either in town or country wanting in their respect, but rather upon all occasions remarkably civil, and ready to do any good office in their power."

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Carteret was Provincial of the Jesuits.

<sup>2</sup> Father Felix Englefield, O.S.F.

<sup>3</sup> Foley, *Records Eng. Prov. S. J.*, vol. v., Series xii., pp. 164-65, and Taunton, *History of the Jesuits in England*, p. 470.



The Mandate for the London District was issued on the 5th of October, 1753, and signed by Bishop Petre and Dr. Challoner. It bears clear traces of being the composition of the latter, and is in fact included by Charles Butler among the bishop's works, though it is in effect only an unpretending little Latin pastoral of sixteen pages. It recapitulates the outline of the rules, laying stress on the more salient points, particularly on the Pope's decision that the vicars apostolic have all that authority in their respective districts that every ordinary has in his diocese, besides the extraordinary faculties which the Holy Father had granted them. Having explained the general drift of the instructions, the two bishops state that their first duty is to express their own submission to the will of the Holy Father, to state what course will hereafter be pursued, and to explain what must henceforth be observed by the clergy. They announce their intention of enforcing exact observance of the decree, and continue all faculties already granted, subject to this observance, adding the concession that any missionary coming to the London District from any of the other vicariates, may, for the space of one month, continue to exercise in their district whatever faculties had been granted to him in his own.

They next prohibit under pain of excommunication any priest from hearing confessions or administering sacraments without their approbation, except in case of extreme necessity, when there is danger of a person dying without the sacraments. Regulations are next laid down as to the double celebration of Mass on one day, and in regard to indulgences, particularly those to be gained by the faithful who attend sermons and catechetical instructions. The clergy are urged to lead lives worthy of their vocation, and are strictly forbidden under pain of suspension to frequent taverns without need, or to spend the evening in drinking or playing cards in such places. They are not to witness comedies or other theatrical exhibitions, nor to go to the gambling houses, "which we regret are so much frequented by Catholics, with a great loss of money and precious time, even on holy days and Sundays, not without scandal to many".

They finally beg all to strive for unity and concord, that the clergy of every order and kind may co-operate in mutual

offices of kindness. The bishops express their own desire to give all possible assistance to all missionaries, both secular and regular, and finally ask all to declare in writing their sincere obedience and submission to the decrees of the Apostolic See, so that the Holy Father, who expected this, might be reassured on the point. "May the God of peace and charity be with all of you, most dear brethren, and may He guard, protect and bless you all."

Bishop Challoner, who was both by nature and grace a man of peace, certainly wrote these words of reconciliation with a sincere heart, in the genuine hope of concord. The good-will he here expressed in words, he was enabled later on in life to show in deeds. His cordial relations with the regulars, his intimate friendships with some of their number, and his consideration and practical kindness, shown towards the Jesuits in the hour of their greatest trial, all confirm the earnestness of his desire for the full harmony of Christian charity.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE MARRIAGE ACT OF 1753.

THE Marriage Act of 1753, though of great benefit to the country at large, operated harshly with regard to Catholics. For their marriages, which hitherto could be legally and validly solemnised according to their own ancient ritual in any place whatever, were required in common with all other marriages, by this Act of Parliament, to take place in the Protestant church according to the rites of the Church of England and in presence of a minister.

Of the general necessity for some such measure there could be no doubt. The fact that marriages could legally be solemnised by any minister of religion in certain places without banns, without licence or any public notice, had given rise to the most scandalous abuses.

The evil had grown up during the years which followed the Restoration in 1660. It was discovered that marriages could be celebrated without banns in any church not subject to the jurisdiction of the bishop. There were several such chapels in London: St. James's, Duke's Place, which stood in the former precincts of the Holy Trinity Priory; the Savoy Chapel; a little chapel at Mayfair, near Hyde Park Corner; and, most important of all, the prison chapels in the Marshalsea, Fleet and King's Bench. In these gaols there were always some needy, broken-down clergymen, whose manner of living had brought them to the disreputable misery of a debtor's prison, and who were glad to earn the smallest fee by performing the marriage ceremony, without any inquiries as to the position of the parties.

As early as 1686 an attempt was made to stop these clandestine marriages, and proceedings were taken against Adam Elliot, the minister of St. James's Church, for celebrating

marriages without banns or licence, which he is said to have done "at the rate of some sixteen couples a day". The proceedings against him broke down on the legal point that the church in question was extra-parochial. The result, particularly in the case of the prison-chapels, soon became a flagrant scandal. Mr. J. S. Burn,<sup>1</sup> who wrote the history of the Fleet marriages, showed from the registers that nearly 3,000 persons were married in that particular prison within the period of five months—October, 1704, to February, 1705. At length an Act of Parliament was passed in 1712 prohibiting the use of these chapels for marriages.

Instead of a remedy this measure proved an aggravation of the evil. The disreputable clerical denizens of the debtors' prisons fitted up rooms in their precincts as chapels and then sent touts into Fleet Street and Ludgate Hill to bring in couples who desired their services. In an oft-quoted passage from Pennant's *History of London*,<sup>2</sup> that writer says: "In walking along the street, in my youth, on the side next to the prison, I have often been tempted by the question, 'Sir, will you be pleased to walk in and be married'. Along this most lawless space was hung up the frequent sign of a male and female hand conjoined, with 'Marriages performed within' written beneath. A dirty fellow invited you in. The parson was seen walking before his shop, a squalid, profligate figure, clad in a tattered plaid night-gown, with a fiery face, and ready to couple you for a dram of gin, or a roll of tobacco."

Nor was this the only evil. Sir Walter Besant, in his studies of London life in the eighteenth century, found reason to doubt the genuineness of many of these pretenders to holy orders. Thus speaking of these prison marriages he says:—<sup>3</sup>

"Many of the clergymen went halves with the tavern-keepers; after the wedding there was generally a carouse. Some of the officiators in cassock and gown were not in Holy Orders at all; some were in the service of the tavern-keepers on a small salary."

Burn confirms this. "In some instances the tavern-

<sup>1</sup> John Southerden Burn, *The Fleet Registers; History of Fleet Marriages*, London, 1833.

<sup>2</sup> Fifth edition (1813), p. 309.

<sup>3</sup> *London in the Eighteenth Century*, London, 1902.

keepers kept a parson on their establishment at a weekly salary of twenty shillings ; while others upon a wedding party arriving, sent for any clergyman they might please to employ and divided the fee with him.”<sup>1</sup>

These clandestine marriages took place not only in the prisons, but under more respectable surroundings in the little chapel at Mayfair, which boasted an annual total of 6,000 marriages. The poorer classes sought the prisons in great numbers, but many a runaway match, involving people of good station, was celebrated at this small building near Hyde Park Corner, which was even advertised for the purpose. “To prevent mistakes the little new chapel in Mayfair, near Hyde Park Corner, is in the corner house opposite to the City side of the great chapel, and within ten yards of it, and the minister and clerk live in the same corner house where the little chapel is, and the licence on a crown stamp, minister and clerk’s fees, together with the certificate, amount to one guinea as heretofore, at any hour till four in the afternoon. And that it may be better known there is a porch at the door like a country church porch.”<sup>2</sup>

This was respectability at low rates. The prisons were less respectable but far cheaper. The evil results to which this state of things led has been summarised by Sir George Trevelyan in his *Life of Fox*.

“The vision of a broken-down parson, ready, without asking questions, to marry any man to any woman for a crown and a bottle, was an ever-present terror to guardians and parents. Numerous were the cases in which boys of rank had become the prey of infamous harpies, and girls with money or beauty had found that the services of a clergyman were employed as a cloak for plunder or seduction. A sham marriage enters into the plot of half the novels of that period ; and the fate which in fiction poor Olivia Primrose suffered, and the future Lady Grandison narrowly escaped, became a terrible reality to many of their sex. Nor were the miseries entailed by such practices confined to a single generation. The succession to property was rendered doubtful and insecure ; every day in term-time produced hearings in Chancery, of appeals in the

<sup>1</sup> *The Fleet Registers*, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Daily Post*, July, 1744 ; quoted by Burn.



Lords, concerning the validity of a marriage, which had been solemnised thirty years before, in a back parlour of a public house, or in some still more degraded haunt of vice; and the children might be ruined by an act of momentary folly committed when the father was a midshipman on leave from Sheerness, or a Westminster boy out for a half-holiday.”<sup>1</sup>

That this state of things called for stern suppression will be readily admitted, but the method in which it was dealt with was needlessly oppressive and raised considerable opposition. The Lord Chancellor himself, Lord Hardwicke, was responsible for the bill designed to put an end to all clandestine marriages. He proposed to stop the practice by the simple expedient of enacting that every marriage was to be solemnised according to the requirements of the Church of England, including banns or licence and the full ritual of the Anglican Church. The only exception made was in favour of Quakers and Jews.

Such provisions were of course a great grievance to Dissenters who, in Trevelyan's words, “must either be married according to the ritual of the Establishment, or not be married at all, whatever objections they might entertain to a service, some passages of which cause even the most devout pair of Church people to wince when it is read over them”.

But the case of Catholics was still harder, for with them it was not a mere question of objecting to the form of the service, but it was a matter involving the principle that they should under no circumstances take part in the worship or religious rites of another body. Marriage in their eyes is not only a civil contract but a sacrament; and the prospect of being forced to receive it under the circumstances required by the bill was one that would do violence to every Catholic conscience.

Yet the bill, once introduced, was pressed on with vigour by its author. “Lord Bath invented this bill,” writes Horace Walpole to Conway, “but had drawn it so ill that the Chancellor was forced to draw a new one, and then grew so fond of his own creature, that he has crammed it down the throat of both Houses,—though they gave many a gulp before they could swallow it.”

The Catholics were filled with consternation. So insigni-

<sup>1</sup> Chapter i., p. 12.

ficant a minority, thankful as it was for the barest toleration, could not hope to make its voice heard to effect. Yet it seemed advisable that some effort should be made. Bishop Challoner appears to have written in this sense to Bishop Stonor of the Midland District, who thus replied to him:<sup>1</sup> "There may be very little reason to hope that any proposal made *by us* or *in our name* would be attended to or received in Parliament: though, perhaps, in a desperate case possibilities ought to be tried as well as probabilities. . . . In order to which it seems proper that these our intent and reasons should be, I don't say printed, but agreed upon and penn'd accurately in form of a memorandum, to be handed from one to another of those who are able and willing to serve our cause, Lay or Clerical, Secular or Regular, Catholic or Protestant," and he concludes: "We have not time nor occasion yet of further consulting Hilton [Rome]. And our masters there would most certainly condemn us, if upon such emergencies we did not judge for ourselves and act accordingly."

There is no trace of any such memorandum having been prepared, as all the papers on the subject in the Diocesan Archives relate to a time when the bill had already become law, and the chief hope lay in the passing of an amending Act. Probably Catholics were taken by surprise, and the time between the introduction and passing of the Bill was so short that no effective steps could be taken. But Milner records that Challoner pressed for the inclusion of Catholics in the exception granted in favour of the Quakers and the Jews, and, not being able himself to appear in the negotiations, he was represented by Mr. Booth, the eminent Catholic conveyancer, who had great weight and influence among the lawyers of the day. He also enlisted the good offices of the Duke of Norfolk who had some interest with the Prime Minister, Henry Pelham, and his brother the Duke of Newcastle.

The passage of the bill through Parliament was stormy, and was marked by fierce passages of arms between two ministers of the Crown, Henry Fox, then Secretary at War, and the Lord Chancellor himself. Fox had himself made a clandestine marriage, having shocked London society nine or ten years before by daring to elope with Lady Caroline Len-

<sup>1</sup> Letter, undated, Westminster Archives, 1751-55

nox, daughter of the Duke of Richmond. Even when he had attained the position of Privy Councillor and Cabinet Minister, he was not considered a suitable connection for that great ducal house. Yet the marriage proved a most happy one, and Fox and his wife continued in love with each other till death parted them after a long married life. This bill was not likely to commend itself to one with such a history, so, although a member of the Ministry, he turned on the bill and attacked both the measure and its author with unsparing vehemence. After Fox had, time after time, covered Lord Hardwicke with ridicule, the Chancellor's son, Charles Yorke, took up the cudgels on his father's behalf, only to turn the violence of the attack on himself. The Chancellor himself fulminated in the Lords against this "dark and insidious genius, the engine of personality and faction," and succeeded in making effective reply. Fox on his side, did not shrink from attacking even his own colleagues on the Treasury Bench. Pointing out how largely ministers themselves were responsible for the numerous amendments to the strict yet carelessly drawn measure, he flourished a copy of the bill, corrected in red ink. "'How bloody it looks!'" said the Solicitor-General. "'Yes,'" cried Fox, "'but thou canst not say I did it. See what a rent the learned Casca made,'" and he pointed to a clause which had been altered by the Solicitor-General himself. "'Through this well-beloved Brutus stabbed;'" and here he indicated Pelham with an emphatic gesture."<sup>1</sup>

Another incident that delighted the House was the breezy speech of handsome Charles Townsend, delivered with all the advantages of his bright manner and ringing laugh. "Are new shackles to be forged," he asked, "to keep young men of ability from rising to a level with their elder brothers?" And he proceeded to argue that younger sons would be debarred from every advantageous match if clandestine marriages were abolished.

On such grounds the bill was debated. There seems to have been fire, humour, repartee and excitement in plenty, but one looks in vain for any statesmanlike consideration of the probable effects of the measure on the nation as a whole,

<sup>1</sup> See Trevelyan, *Life of Charles James Fox*, chap. i., where the incident mentioned above and other details are vividly described.

or any regard for the religious susceptibilities of Dissenters, still less of Catholics. So amid livelier scenes, the graver issues were lost sight of, and the bill was debated on grounds that now seem frivolous in the extreme. But the evil to be remedied was too pressing to allow either the innate defects of the bill, or attacks on it from without, to prevail against its passing. It passed both Houses and received the Royal assent before the session ended, early in June.

The predicament in which it left the unhappy Catholics was a cruel one. If they obeyed the Act they did what their consciences told them was a grave wrong: whereas if they disobeyed it and were content with a marriage solemnised as of old by one of their own priests, the marriage was held to be void by law, their future children were made illegitimate, they themselves might be convicted as felons, and the officiating priest was liable to fourteen years' transportation. The utmost that the efforts of the Duke of Norfolk could effect was an assurance from the Government that the attendance of Catholics in Protestant churches, on these occasions, was to be considered, not as an act of religious conformity, but as "a ceremony prescribed by the law of the land for the civil legality of the marriage". With this bare statement Dr. Challoner and priests and people had to be content.

Their perplexity was great. Many priests accepted the view that such a marriage, even though accompanied by religious rites, had become under the compulsion of the law merely a civil ceremony, and was therefore lawful, the prayers of the officiating minister being regarded merely as the good wishes of a civil official. Others, including the bishop himself, were altogether unable to accept this wide interpretation, and took their stand on the fact that the ceremony was actually a religious service conducted in the church, by the minister, and according to the rites of an erroneous worship. After some weeks' discussion, it became clear that no agreement was likely; and in August the bishop had determined to refer the question to Rome, sending copies of the Act of Parliament and Anglican Marriage Service for the consideration of the authorities there.

On the 14th of August, Alban Butler, who was then staying in London, wrote to Bishop Hornyold: "Mr. Challoner

will consult him [the Pope] about our case: Hitherto it was certainly unlawful, but the Act may perhaps determine the rite to be civil and political. The blessings give no great difficulty, for a magistrate *potest bene apprecari sponso et sponsae*, says Benedict XIV. So may a Minister. . . . The words *before this church* give me more difficulty and the omission of the mention of impediments of the Church but only of the divine law: as they deny the first. . . . In parts of Holland at Embden, Eymeric, etc., under the king of Prussia, it is allowed; but the Calvinists there use not so many religious ceremonies.”<sup>1</sup>

The answer from Rome, and the bishop's subsequent attitude with regard to the difficulty, are clearly described by himself in a letter which he wrote in the following April to a Northern priest, Mr. Thomas Gibson, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, who had written to him with certain questions proposed by a friend.<sup>2</sup>

“DEAR SIR,

“I have neither leisure nor inclination to dispute: nor to enter upon a discussion or resolution of the queries, proposed by your friend. The case being argued amongst our people, with no probability of their coming to an agreement about it, I thought it best to refer it to Mr. Abraham, [the Pope] to whom I sent at the same time the act of parliament, and the form of marriage in the common prayer. I had an answer from his secretary, disallowing our people's being married in that manner, as a *communicatio in sacris*. To this answer, I shall conform myself in practice: so far at least as to disallow their kneeling down to receive the parson's blessing, and all those solemn prayers, prescribed in the Protestant Liturgy: which if they are not sacred, I know not what is. The farthest, I think we can go, is to tolerate, where necessity may require it, our people's going to church, (out of the time of the service) and there making or renewing, their marriage contract, in the usual form of words, *In &c.* before the minister, and witnesses; putting on also the ring, if they

<sup>1</sup> Westminster Archives, Papers, 1751-55.

<sup>2</sup> Ushaw Archives MSS., vol. ii. There is other correspondence among the Northern Clergy on the subject in the same volume.



please, and paying the dues; but excusing themselves from kneeling and praying. But then, I think in this case, they should first be married by a priest. As for our countenancing marriages, *absolutely clandestine*, which the Church has always detested, [it] is what should not be thought of.

The priests, to be sure, must be cautious as to the persons they join in marriage: so as not to put themselves in the power of those, of whom they are not secure, but in case of danger they must employ strangers, or such as live at a distance to do the job. But after all, 'tis a jest for them, who every day are transgressing laws, which subject them to the penalty of high treason, to be so much afraid of a transgression, which at the worst can only send them abroad, where they are very much wanted, and where they may do great service to the souls of many.

“ I am,

“ Dear Sir,

“ Ever yours,

“ J. FISHER.

“ April 4, 1754.

“ For Mr. Tho. Gibson with Mrs. Silvertop in the Rolt Market, Newcastle-upon-Tine.”

The reply of the Holy See had been received before November, 1753, for in the early days of that month Dr. Challoner was in communication with Bishop Stonor as to the state of affairs. It was from the wise old Vicar Apostolic of the Midlands, now nearing his end, that he obtained the advice which was the ground-work of all subsequent proceedings. In a letter dated 8th November, 1753, Dr. Stonor in handwriting now shaky with age, but still showing the old masterful character, traces out a line of action which Dr. Challoner subsequently adopted point for point. Nothing that was done proved of any avail, but the inspiration of such effort as was made was entirely due to the old man, whose long experience and innate common sense made him a sagacious counsellor. Having expressed his gladness at getting the clear directions of the Holy See in the “terrible affair,” he goes straight to the point.

“ What we have most to attend to, after recourse to the

divine Mercy for our different flocks, is the second part of the advice of his Holiness;—to help ourselves as far as we are able. I, from my absence from Town and other circumstances, am able to do very little in the active way. The most that I can do is to impart to others, more capable of acting, what I think most proper to be done.

“The first of which things seems to be to have a memorial drawn up of the reasons which we have to ask and hope for some relief, to be communicated to our friends and those that will hear us, that so we may all be in a story, and move in like manner to the same end.”

He then suggests, one by one, the very points which were afterwards used in the memorial that was drawn up on this suggestion. Every feature in the memorial is found suggested in this letter, and the London Catholics had nothing material to add. There was clearly some ground for hoping that the Government, moved by the discontent of the Dissenters, would introduce an amending statute. “No time,” he continues, “ought to be lost in beginning our solicitations: because the session is like to be shorter and more crowded with business than usual.” He thought that if Catholics could be excused from the actual religious service they might be permitted to appear in the Anglican Church before the minister for the purposes of the civil contract.

“If you of London draw up a memorial upon the foregoing or any other heads, which you shall think more proper, I desire I may have a copy. For, I believe, I can get the affair well recommended to some members, both Lords and Commons, and even to Lord Chancellor.

“I proposed in a former letter a way of introducing the affair into Parliament, *viz.*, by a petition of foreign Catholic Merchants, but you at London will best judge what will be proper of this kind.

“I should think you would do well to convene together the Heads also of the Regulars, and there agree to pursue the common cause in concert and each apply to his friends.”

The suggested memorial was put in hand, but there is no trace of any movement on the part of the foreign merchants.

Dr. Challoner's own views are set forth with great precision in a memorandum in his own handwriting now in the

Diocesan Archives. These are marked by a sound practical sense.

“Humanly speaking, we have not the least grounds to hope that any proposal made by us or in our name, should be regarded in Parliament: we have had too much experience of the dispositions of the greatest part of the members in our regard to flatter ourselves with the expectation of any favour to be directly granted to us by name.

“Nothing, therefore, can be attempted to any purpose in our favour by way of a direct proposal to Parliament of an amendment of the bill on our account. We must expect to see if by any other occasion it is to be called over, to be revised and amended: and then if we can use our interest to have some clause allowed of, in which, without our being named, we may meet with some redress.

“Such a clause would be, if Dissenters in general, without restraining it to Protestant Dissenters, were to be exempted from going to Church to be married, or at least from passing through all the prayers and ceremonies and blessings of the minister.”

Having proposed a clause which the bishop thinks would meet the case, but which, we may remark parenthetically, is absolutely unlike the phraseology of any Act of Parliament ever penned, he continues:—

“The first thing therefore we have to do is to find out whether or no there be any design of revising or making any alterations in the aforesaid act this session, and, if so, who are like to be the managers employed for that purpose. And then to make interest with them to procure their inserting some such clause as above.

“Particularly if the Dissenters are like to be considered we must push to try if we cannot under some general appellation be brought in along with them.

“In the mean time it may be proper to draw up some memorial representing our case, our readiness to comply with the intentions of the law, and with every part of it, as far as it is not inconsistent with our Religion; the grounds we have to flatter ourselves that under so mild a government no new hardship is designed to be imposed upon us for our consciences, and how fatal the consequences must be to us if the law be not qualified &c. which we hope is far from the design of the

government, who have always showed themselves averse to persecution. Something of this nature, drawn up in a proper manner, might be of use to be put in particular hands, but not to be laid before the House, for the reasons alleged above.

"Amongst the proffers we may make we need not mention going to church, much less being married before the congregation, in the time of the service. This would look too much like a conformity in religion.

"The great point of all, without which there is no prospect of success, must be for us all to recommend the whole affair to God, who has brought us out of many dangers; and if we duly apply to Him, will not forsake us now."

In the Westminster Archives there are two or three undated forms of the memorial, differing slightly from one another, but all clearly based on Bishop Stonor's letter. Dr. Challoner himself drafted the memorial, keeping closely to the lines suggested, and submitted the draft to Mr. Duane, a leading Catholic conveyancer. This gentleman was one of those Catholic lawyers who devoted themselves to conveyancing and chamber practice, because the penal laws prevented them from being called to the bar. There was a long succession of them during the eighteenth century, ending with Charles Butler, who was the first Catholic to be called to the bar, after the Act of 1791, and who thus became the link between this old race of conveyancers and that new line of Catholic lawyers which has given so many distinguished men to bench and bar during the past century. In his *Memoirs* he has left a short account of some of the greater names, including Mr. Pigot, the great authority on Recoveries, Mr. Booth, "the father of modern conveyancing," and Mr. Fearne, who wrote a classic on *Contingent Remainders*.

Mr. Duane, whom Dr. Challoner now consulted, was one of the most remarkable of these conveyancers, and he became known about the time that Mr. Booth was on the decline. He was author of some legal works, and had an international reputation as a numismatist, his celebrated collection of Syriac medals being still preserved at the University of Glasgow. Charles Butler, who was subsequently one of his pupils, describes him as "a polite scholar, of acknowledged taste in painting and music, and the most skilful medallist in England".

Having suggested a few verbal alterations, and re-drafted the suggested clause, which it was hoped might be inserted in the amending Act, he approved the draft as a whole. His alterations were accepted with the exception of certain words in his new clause. Apparently the bishop disliked the description "papists or persons really professing the popish religion," for he altered that phrase to "such dissenters or others as make a scruple of conscience to conform with the church by law established".

Among the Westminster Archives there is a copy of the memorial in the bishop's own writing, which appears to represent its final form, for it includes all Mr. Duane's suggestions. It remains the official statement of the Catholic grievance created by Lord Hardwicke's Act, a grievance not finally removed until the Marriage Act of 1837 (6 and 7 Wm. IV., c. 85) was passed to relieve all who scrupled at joining in the services of the Established Church.

"THE CASE OF THE R. CATHOLICKS, WITH RELATION TO  
THE LATE ACT AGAINST CLANDESTINE MARRIAGES.

"1. They are far from disapproving the act as to its substance, ends and intentions: they even highly applaud it, as designed to put a stop to a most flagrant and growing evil.

"2. They are willing and ready, in compliance with it, to go all the lengths that their conscience will allow them. They are no ways against their being obliged to have their banns proclaimed at church, nor against their appearing before the parochial minister, or any one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace, and there declaring their contracts of marriage; and this before whatever number of witnesses shall be judged proper; nor are they against their being obliged to have their marriages registered in the parish books. Now all this they humbly apprehend may abundantly suffice to prevent the evils of clandestine marriages, and to answer all the ends of the law.

"3. All that they humbly crave is, that nothing may be insisted upon, or required of them, that is contrary to their conscience, or to the tenets of their religion. Now the principles of their religion, which they look upon themselves obliged in conscience to adhere to, absolutely forbid them to



receive any sacrament, such as they hold matrimony to be, from the ministers of any other religion; or to join with any such ministers in such sacred rites, solemn prayers, ceremonies and blessings, as are appointed in the Common-prayer book, in the order for the solemnization of marriage.

“4. Wherefore they flatter themselves, from the experience they have had, which they shall always gratefully acknowledge, of the lenity of the present government in their regard, and their known averseness to persecution; and more especially as they are assured it was not the design of the act to impose any new hardships upon them on account of their religion; that they will not be unwilling to admit of some qualification in the bill, by which R. Catholicks might be exempted from the necessity of going to church to be married, or at least from going through the whole service appointed in the Common-prayer book, for the solemnization of marriage: lest otherwise they should be exposed, merely for not going against their conscience, to the dreadful consequences of having their marriages annulled and their children bastardized; which would be a greater hardship than any they have hitherto undergone.

“5. They humbly conceive that such a qualification of the act, would neither break in upon the wholesome ends and intentions of the law, nor give any umbrage or offence to the publick: especially if they were, under some general appellation, to be excepted in the law by some such clause as follows:—

“‘Provided that nothing in this act contained, shall extend or be construed to extend to any such dissenters or others, as make a scruple of conscience to conform with the church by law established, in the ceremonies, blessings and prayers, appointed in the order for the solemnization of marriage in the book of Common prayer: so as that the banns be published (add here the words of the act) and so as upon the marriage of any such dissenters &c, such marriage be publickly, by both parties in person declared in the parish church &c within the space of — days, from and immediately after such marriage, before the minister or parson of the said church, or his curate, in the presence of — witnesses; and so as such marriage be entered in the parish book, or register of such parish, within the space of — days immediately after such marriage.’

“This would be complying with the act in all the essential things required by it, and would fully answer the ends proposed by the law; and would set their conscience at ease. They also believe that such a change would be highly acceptable to Christians of diverse denominations, residing in this kingdom, either for the sake of commerce, or employed in our manufactures; to Lutherans, Greeks &c and even to all the Nonconformists, or dissenters in general.”

It would seem as though this memorial was never circulated, for there was no amending bill and consequently no opportunity for raising the question. It remains therefore merely a record of the reasonable attitude taken up by the Catholic body under a grievance which lasted for more than eighty years and which never need have existed at all.

Meanwhile the practical difficulties were great. As we have seen from his letter to Mr. Gibson, the bishop thought that the best course for Catholics to adopt was to be married first by their own priest, and then to attend the Protestant church, renewing their contract before the minister, and even putting on the ring. But they were not to join in the prayers, or give any outward sign of taking part in the religious rite such as kneeling down. It will be noticed that by this course the marriages of Catholics would be valid by English law, and the children of such marriages would be legitimate, but equally by the law the previous celebration of the marriage by the priest was a felony punishable in the case of the celebrant by transportation for fourteen years. Though no Catholic priest is known to have incurred this penalty, the provision was by no means an empty threat, as is shown by the conviction and subsequent transportation of two Anglican clergymen, the Rev. John Wilkinson<sup>1</sup> and the Rev. Mr. Grierson, minister and curate of the Savoy Chapel respectively, which took place in 1756.

The danger was too real to be ignored, and there were some priests who, under the circumstances, thought it would be better for the parties to go first to the Protestant church and then to come before the priest and renew their consent. This

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Wilkinson was the father of the famous actor, Tate Wilkinson, and it is curious that his conviction took place in consequence of action taken by Garrick.

course had the advantage of keeping on the right side of the law, but the drawback was that in this case the Anglican ceremony was indeed the true marriage, and therefore the sacrament itself was conferred without the blessing of the Church and amid surroundings of an alien worship.

There is a tradition among the London clergy that this was evaded by the expedient of withholding true internal consent, so that the parties were able to give that consent for the first time, and so to receive the Sacrament of Matrimony, before the Catholic priest. According to another view the contract expressed before the priest operated as a second expression of one continued consent which commenced a contract before one and finished it before another.

In this way there arose a divergency of practice, some priests insisting on the Catholic rite being performed before the parties went to the Protestant church: others preferring them to go before the Protestant minister in the first place, and then to appear before the Catholic priest. A letter written by Bishop Challoner to Dr. Christopher Stonor on the 17th of July, 1755, explains clearly the practice as existing after the passing of the Act.<sup>1</sup>

“As to our marriages, since the Act took place, we have not pretended to publish any regulations about them: as our friends in your parts [Rome] have not yet given us clear instructions on that head. The method that has been followed by as many of our gentry as have been married since the act, has been to be married first by a priest, and then, after agreeing with the parson to repeat in the church, before him and two or three witnesses, the usual form of words of taking one another for man and wife: and after that to turn away and to have nothing to do either with his blessing or prayers. This has been done by the gentry both in the north and south; with our toleration rather than approbation. Many of the inferior sort have ventured to marry without going to church at all; and others have gone to church, and, I fear, have gone through the whole ceremony of the common prayer book: either for want of instruction, (too many of the priests themselves favouring these marriages), or for want of resolution. It would not be feasible in our circumstances, and least of all since this Act,

<sup>1</sup> Westminster Archives, *Epp. Var.*, xiii., 116.

to oblige our Catholics to be married by their ordinary priest : they are obliged now to be married by such priests as can do it with least danger ; and therefore the ordinary priests for their own security send them to others, who live at a distance ; or procure others who live at a distance, to come and marry them."

The bishop's own mind was quite clear. He did not wish Catholics to go to the Protestant church at all, and thought it better that they should suffer all the inconveniences of the law, rather than take part in a rite which appeared to him clearly ecclesiastical in spite of every argument adduced to show that it could lawfully be regarded as a civil ordinance. If, however, the parties felt unable to make so great a sacrifice, he tolerated their going to the Anglican church, but only *after* their marriage by a Catholic priest. The second alternative he described in a letter written some years later as "a practice which I have always declared against both in word, in writing and print".<sup>1</sup> Yet his view was far from being generally accepted. In the same letter he writes : "The truth is, many of these gentlemen, [the priests] especially of the Regulars, patronize that practice ; and some of them so far as to refuse to marry any who will not first go to Church : and as the lawyers and gentry, influenced by them, and the fear of the people all tend the same way, it has been impossible for us to prevent many irregularities in this kind. The less because we have not been able to procure a categorical answer from Hilton [Rome] to our queries on this head : and, therefore, not being sufficiently authorized from thence, we dare not to be positive in declaring ourselves in matters where we have both the law and the greatest part of our own people against us."

The persistent refusal of Rome to give a definite answer on this point, important as it was, prevented the controversy from being closed in the only possible way,—by the voice of authority. Half a century later we find the opponents of Dr. Challoner's views still pleading it, as they had every right to do, in their own defence. Thus a London priest, Mr. Daniel Gaffey, in a brief dissertation which he wrote against Dr. Milner's views,<sup>2</sup> dwells on the refusal of the Roman authorities to give

<sup>1</sup> Letter, 7 Feb., 1760, Ushaw Archives, vol. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Clifton Archives, 1791, No. 46.



a decision in favour of Bishop Challoner's views. There he writes: "The practice of sending the parties *first* to contract in the Protestant Church, is pronounced by the good prelate, a very great abuse which in a prophetic style he positively affirms would not be tolerated by the Holy See. The confidence with which he speaks, and the word *tolerandum*, plainly show that he meant a future decision in favour of his own opinion, and that he made himself quite sure of that decision. A few years after his demise, I myself applied three several times, to his immediate successor Bishop Talbot, in order to obtain from him some rule of conduct on this subject; his answer to me each time was, *That Rome had been frequently applied to for a decision, but that they could not get Rome to speak*, and the third time he added *that he could give me no other answer.*"

Though this silence may have been dictated by wise and prudent considerations, yet in the ordinary course of things it could hardly have been looked for; so that for the first few years after the passing of the Act nothing was done by the bishops, who seem to have been waiting the guidance that was not to be given. At length in 1759 they took action, and as Dr. Milner writes:<sup>1</sup> "The Catholic Bishops in 1759, five years after the passing of the Marriage Act, thought it necessary to publish the following injunction to be read by all priests previously to the Marriage ceremony, which injunction their successors at the present day continue to promulgate, by putting the book which contains it into the hands of all their Missioners. 'You must take care,' say they to the parties, 'to admit of nothing in the celebration of your marriage which may be inconsistent with your religion, as it would be to receive a nuptial benediction from a minister of another sect.' Yet it is a melancholy fact that nine out of ten Catholics in the aforesaid circumstances, from irreligion, shame or other causes, do actually submit to receive the said Benediction."

Dr. Challoner himself in the same year issued printed instructions to the clergy of the London District, which are thus summarised by Milner:—

"You must remember that all communication in matters

<sup>1</sup> *A Proposition submitted to the decision of the English Catholic Bishops and to the opinion of Catholic divines in this and other countries, 1794, Clifton Archives, 1794, No. 1.*



of religion with persons of a different persuasion has long ago been prohibited to Catholics by the Holy See, and hence much more so in the reception of Sacraments, etc. But if there should appear an urgent necessity for the faithful to present themselves before ministers who are not of the Catholic Communion, for the purpose of legalising their marriage contracts, you must, at least, seriously admonish them not to receive the nuptial benediction from such ministers, not to kneel to them or to join with them in their prayers: and, first of all, to receive in a due manner, the sacrament itself of matrimony by the ministry of a Catholic priest.<sup>1</sup> You must moreover be fully persuaded that the contrary practice, which has begun to creep in, of neglecting these precautions, and of permitting and even forcing the faithful to enter into their marriage contracts in the churches of Protestants, before they are united together by the Catholic Priest, is a grievous abuse, and such as never will be tolerated by the Apostolic See.

“RIC. DEBOREN.

“Feb. 9, 1759.”

The position was, however, not satisfactory, and the bishop felt the difficulty, for he concludes his letter<sup>2</sup> from which extracts have already been given, by summing up his own attitude:—

“My practice and what I recommend to our gentlemen here is, 1. To dissuade as much as possible all that apply to us from going to Church at all. 2. Where he cannot obtain this to insist upon their first being married *ritu Catholico*: absolutely insisting upon their not joining with the minister in prayer; nor kneeling down to receive his benediction. 3. Even so; not to give a positive sanction to their going to church; as being a proceeding which exposes them to the danger of appearing, at least, to communicate *in sacris*; but on our part only to wink at what we cannot hinder; as supposing them to be in *bona fide* and leaving them in it. This is my practice: in which if there be any error, God give us grace to see it and

<sup>1</sup> From this passage Challoner appears to hold that the priest is the minister of this sacrament; and even in his explanation of matrimony in *The Catholic Christian Instructed*, he is silent on the point.

<sup>2</sup> Letter, Feb. 7, 1760, Ushaw Archives, vol. ii.

mend it. And be so good as to beg this for us in your prayer. Wishing you all happiness for time and eternity, I remain,

“Your servant in Christ,

“RICH. CHALLONER.”

And there, so far as he was concerned, the matter rested during the remainder of his life-time. Yet the operation of the Act led to many difficulties, and whichever solution was adopted by Catholics, there ensued in many cases, material if not formal sin, scruples of conscience and other evils.

In practice it was soon found that it was almost impossible to prevent couples from kneeling to receive the clergyman's blessing, or from joining in his prayers, when once they were within the walls of the Protestant church. Yet English Catholics as a body had always maintained the declaration made by the Council of Trent in 1562, that “English Catholics may not be present at the prayers of heretics without grave sin,” and had always acted on this, so that in many cases at least their share in the Anglican ceremony was performed in doubtful or even in bad faith.<sup>1</sup>

Then in the case of those who went first to the Anglican church, the majority of priests considered that the couple was guilty of sacrilege in so contracting the sacrament, and though in time this practice became so universal that in 1834 Dr. F. C. Husenbeth writes of it as the accepted “modern practice,” yet it clearly did not become so without much trouble of conscience to clergy and laity alike.

Though Milner, brought up in the Challoner tradition, argued strongly that this course was “sinful and sacrilegious,” other priests took a different view. The London clergy certainly found practical difficulties in any other course. For in cases where Challoner's advice as to avoiding the Anglican ceremony altogether was followed, the marriage was invalid at law, and one or other of two unfortunate results occasionally followed. For, in some cases husband or wife, knowing that they were free by law, subsequently repudiated their marriage ;

<sup>1</sup> *The Declaration of the Fathers of the Councill of Trent concerning the going unto Churches, at such time as hereticall service is saied or heresy preached*; the appendix to Father Garnet's extremely rare tract, *Of Christian Renunciation*. It was reprinted in Father Henry More's *Historia Provinciæ Anglicanæ S. J.* (St. Omer, 1660).

and in other cases on the death of the husband, the heir-at-law stepped in and claimed the entire property on the ground that the marriage was null, the widow unrecognised by law and the children illegitimate. When by experience these results were found to follow, the clergy endeavoured to exact a promise from the parties that they would duly legitimise their union by attending before the minister; but even when this promise was given, it was often not kept through inadvertence or procrastination, with the possibility of the unfortunate results described above. Mr. Gaffey, the London priest, describing this state of things in the document already cited, adds: "These are not mere probabilities. They are cases which have happened within my own knowledge, and within that of every active missionary in this metropolis."

Thus it came to pass that Bishop Challoner's authority, great as it was among Catholics, did not in this instance prevail, and in spite of his strongly expressed view and his directions to the clergy, the more usual practice was for Catholic marriages to be celebrated first in the Anglican Church, and then before a priest. Much as he disliked the practice, he admitted as early as 1760 that "the greatest part of our own people" followed this course. In 1794 Milner, equally opposed to it, admitted that it was "a very common practice which gains ground more and more, and which is sanctioned and recommended by several active missionaries".

At length in the last year of William IV. the Marriage Act of 1836<sup>1</sup> was introduced to place all Dissenters, including Catholics, on the same footing as the Jews and Quakers were, who alone of all English subjects had been exempt from the necessity of marriage according to the rites of the Church of England. By this Act legal marriages could be solemnised in any building certified for the purpose, according to such form as the parties may prefer, provided such marriages take place in the presence of the registrar and two witnesses. By this simple and common-sense expedient all the old difficulties of clandestine marriages were effectually guarded against and the heavy grievance swept away under which Catholics had laboured for over eighty years.

<sup>1</sup> 6 and 7 Wm. IV., cap. 85.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### MEDITATIONS FOR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR.

1754.

IN the year 1753 Bishop Challoner published his *Meditations for Every Day in the Year*, the work which was for long the standard meditation book in every Catholic household, and which, together with the *Garden of the Soul*, has taken its place as one of the best-known works in English Catholic literature.

The full title was *Considerations upon Christian Truths and Christian Duties Digested into Meditations for Every Day in the Year*. It was issued in two volumes without the name of either author or publisher; but the identity of the writer was well known to all, and the book, then as now, went by the familiar name of "Challoner's Meditations". It soon came into general use in Catholic homes all over England, and the reading of one of these meditations became a customary feature of family night prayers.

It was also welcomed by the clergy, who found in it not only an aid to mental prayer, but a summary of many points of ascetical theology. Thus Bishop Milner describes it as "by far the most valuable and useful body of practical divinity in our language".

The plan of the book is simplicity itself. After a brief preface explaining the nature of mental prayer, the author gives for each day in the year a meditation which consists of three points and a conclusion. He so arranges his subject matter that he blends a summary of Christian doctrine, both dogmatic and moral, with the cycle of mysteries commemorated on the chief festivals.

Thus for January and February he gives preliminary meditations on the service of God and the evil of sin, introducing,

as occasion serves, the Epiphany, the Baptism of Our Lord and His first Miracle. From the 19th of February he ceases to observe the day of the month, and inserts a series which follows the Calendar of the Church from Ash Wednesday until the Octave of Corpus Christi is closed. These meditations for Lent, Paschal time and Whitsuntide treat of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Our Lord, the Descent of the Holy Ghost, and the mystery of the Blessed Sacrament. As a background to this pageant of Redemption, he chooses the subjects of fasting, works of mercy, prayer, the three theological virtues of faith, hope and charity, devoting special attention under the last heading to his favourite subject, Divine Love. He also gives some meditations on the Lord's Prayer. Incidentally, he treats of Baptism during Low week and of Confirmation during the Octave of Pentecost. After the Octave of Corpus Christi, he reverts once more to the days of the month, beginning with the 14th of June, from which date until the end of the month he treats of the Holy Eucharist as a Sacrifice and of the Sacrament of Penance. The remaining Sacraments, Extreme Unction, Holy Order and Matrimony find no place in his scheme of subjects.

The second volume begins with the 1st of July, when he introduces the meditations on Death, Judgment, Hell and Heaven which last until the Assumption, when he leads the soul through the subjects of mortification and humility, the eight beatitudes and the ten commandments, the precepts of the Church, the seven deadly sins and the cardinal virtues. November and December are given up to the Miracles and Parables of Our Lord, His Incarnation and His Birth.

Thus with a holy ingenuity he unites the study of our own souls, their dangers, needs, privileges and destiny, with the contemplation of the life and teaching of Our Saviour. In a very plain and straightforward way he places before us the simple and fundamental thoughts which lead the soul to the knowledge of God and itself. There is no effort at being original; no seeking after new points of view; no suggestion of new thoughts or subtle speculation. He is content to urge the old truths with apostolic directness and simplicity. His sources, as he says, are "the word of God and the writings of the saints and servants of God".



Above all he is practical. The issues involved in the warfare of each single soul were too terribly real to him to allow him to be other than urgent and insistent. He would have had little patience with those meditation-books in which the personality and subjective impressions of the writer come to occupy the first place, and in which we are impressed not so much by the truths themselves as by the refinement of cleverness, the intellectual subtlety, or the imaginative gifts shown in their presentment. In such a case we are led to think more of the messenger than of the message.

Challoner, who saw every human soul in this world hanging between heaven and hell, under the need of working out its salvation with the help of God and hindrance of the devil, could not stop to dally with that sort of introspection, even had he possessed the talent for it. Like St. Paul he felt that his task was to preach not himself but Christ crucified; and to him the daily service of Christ was a very practical matter, calling for vigorous and persevering effort. In the very first meditation—that for the 1st of January on the Circumcision of Christ—he dwells on the need of “the serious application of our souls to a daily mortification of our passions and corrupt inclinations”. And from this first meditation to the last he insists on the daily practical work to be done in every soul. So his message is simple in the extreme. Learn from the example of Christ, and from the study of your own soul, what you have to do—and do it at once. “Set then thy house in order now: begin this very day to rectify the whole state of thy interior: and live henceforward as thou desirest to die. There cannot be too great a security where eternity is at stake” (Jan. 2).

But though we shall search the *Meditations* in vain for original thought or new views, there is not one of his books into which he has put more of himself than this. For the most part his books are adaptations from older authors, or the recasting of controversial matter, or compilations from other sources. Here we have his own work, straight from his own inner life, and written out of his own spiritual experience. So fully has his first biographer, Barnard, with his constant desire for edification, realised this, that he has loaded his pages with quotations from the *Meditations*; and whenever he desires to dwell on

one or other of the bishop's virtues, it is in a long citation from this book that he finds the best expression of his meaning.

It is not, indeed, always safe to judge a man by his books, as witness the instance of Sir Richard Steele and the *Christian Hero*, but where, as in the case of Challoner, a man's external acts are in full harmony with his written word, it is less dangerous to infer that his inner life is in accord with his expressed ideals.

If we were precluded from indirect evidence of this kind there would be no means at all of gaining any knowledge of the interior life of Bishop Challoner. For where he or his feelings were concerned he was the most reticent of men. Nowhere has he lifted the veil from the secret places of his soul.

In this respect he, and, we may add, his fellow-bishops of the eighteenth century, differ from the great prelates who were to guide the Church in this country during the following age. The latter, living in freer, more expansive days, have for one reason or another put on record for us much about themselves. Wiseman made notes of some of his spiritual experiences which have been made public in his biography; Manning had his *Diaries* and *Notes*; Newman wrote his *Apologia*. Ullathorne himself belonging as he did to the old Catholics, has given us occasional glimpses of his inner life, even though his *Autobiography* is chiefly concerned with exterior matters, and though he never failed to observe that beautiful Benedictine reticence which always remembers that it is good to hide the secret of the king. And among the priests and laity of distinguished name, there is hardly one whose spiritual life has not in some degree been made known to us by letters or journals or the recollections of friends. But this practice of recording the experiences of the soul was not common among the old traditional Catholics. It began to make itself felt when the Oxford Movement gave many new sons to the ancient Faith. Such men, full of the great things which God had wrought in their souls, were quick to pour out their glad *Magnificat* in the hearing of all. It may be, too, that the old Evangelical tone of mind so prevalent in England in the days of their youth made it natural for them to regard it as a duty to testify to the work of the Lord in their souls. Much stress was laid on the value of personal experience in the spiritual

life, and the narration of such experiences might be a powerful help in spreading the light.

But in the eighteenth century Catholics had long been trained to be very silent about themselves. This, no doubt, was largely due to the circumstances of the times; though, clearly, it was not altogether so. The need of caution in preserving documents which might reveal more than was prudent in face of the penal laws, urgent though it was, has not interfered with the preservation of documents far more compromising than any mere autobiographical notes were likely to be. Letters were interchanged which might have led to unpleasant proceedings had they fallen into unfriendly hands: yet such letters continued not only to be sent and received, but to be preserved. The need for secrecy did not prevent Bishops Challoner or Talbot from committing to paper detailed accounts of diocesan funds or notes as to charities and benefactions, so that it could not entirely account for the absence of more intimately personal papers.

The truth is that such papers are not to be found for the simple reason that they were never written. The spiritual system under which Challoner and his contemporaries were trained urged them to unceasing efforts at self-abnegation. In one place he says of humility that it is the virtue which teaches us to despise ourselves; and he adds "humility is the foundation of all other virtues; they have all a necessary dependence upon it". From this he deduces the need of acquiring knowledge of ourselves by pregnant and serious consideration; but he would not have thought it worth while spending time in recording the results of the inquiry. Had there been any occasion for him to write the story of his own inner experiences, as St. Augustine and St. Teresa had done before him, and as Newman did after him, he would certainly have set about the task to the greater glory of God in the simple and unassuming way that was natural to him. We may feel sure that he who had given to his people editions of the *Confessions* of St. Augustine and the *Autobiography* of St. Teresa would have highly valued the *Apologia*.

But in his own case no external circumstances called for such an undertaking. The discipline of stern self-repression had become part of his spiritual nature, and without some

direct object in view he would probably have regarded the desire of making any personal record of his own feelings as a temptation to a subtle form of self-love. Throughout all his books there is an entire absence of any reference to his own experiences, while in his letters there is the same almost unbroken silence. Therefore when we wish to realise the man as he was in himself, without reference to others or his duties to them, we have to fall back upon the unconscious self-revelation of the meditations. Here, at least, were his own ideals. This was the way in which he himself endeavoured to work out his following of Christ.

Every Catholic who enjoys the varied and inexhaustible inheritance of the faith is influenced consciously or unconsciously by the doctrine, thought and practice of the Church as a whole. The *sensus fidelium* has been formed by the Holy Spirit working upon human souls in all ages. The use of Holy Scripture, the writings of the Fathers, the revelations of the Saints, the teaching of the great masters in the spiritual life, have acted and reacted on one another until they have blended into that mighty force of Catholic instinct and Catholic feeling which supplies the unity underlying the variety to be found in the school of Saints.

But in addition to this collective influence, souls are invariably subject to special attractions. One is led to this doctrine; another to that. Some will allegorise at Alexandria, while others will be literal at Antioch. There are those who are formed on the early Fathers of the Church, others who are drawn to the more recent Saints. The monastic ideal summons souls from all classes, while others drawn likewise from all classes must live the active life. There is no end to the variety of our Catholic inheritance. We speak of Benedictine methods and Jesuit methods and Sulpician methods even in our prayer. But the more we study the various manifestations of Catholic life, spiritual and intellectual, the more we realise that they are all fundamentally one. "There are diversities of graces but the same Spirit; and there are diversities of ministries but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations but the same God, who worketh all in all."<sup>1</sup>

In the spiritual character of Challoner we have an instance

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 4-6.



of one who, more than most men, made efforts to enter upon as much of his inheritance as was possible. Of his devotion to Holy Scripture enough has been said; he is for ever quoting the Fathers in his works; he had devoted himself for years to a close study of theology; he delighted in the life stories of the Saints. There never was a more thorough Catholic than he in his entire absorption in the Church. She was to him, what he styles her in the title of one of his books,—the City of God. In that city he found all that his soul needed; beyond it he did not care to look, because he could never exhaust all that he found within. He was content to sink his individuality in the communion of Saints, and so throughout his whole life he was borne along by that flood of collective Catholic faith and practice.

When we come to pick out the special influences that shaped him, the task is the more difficult, just because of his breadth of interest within the Church. At one moment one is tempted to find the key to everything in his love of Scripture, at another time his thorough training in and devotion to theology seems to preponderate, while again at another the historical sense is strong within him. As throwing light on this, we may note that the *Meditations* are full of Scripture and theology, not indeed always explicitly quoted or stated, but intimately pervading every thought. It is when we consider the use he makes of both, that we come a little nearer to the immediate forces that were working in his soul. Careful study shows him to us as chiefly influenced by two great Saints, St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Francis of Sales. The influence of St. Thomas is less direct, showing itself, as it does, chiefly in his theology, for he had always been a devoted Thomist, even at Douay University, where the doctrine of the angelic doctor was not in the ascendancy.

The influence of St. Francis, on the other hand, is apparent on every page, the very form of the meditations being derived from the *Introduction to a Devout Life*. The thoughts in the ten brief meditations of that work are carefully worked into corresponding meditations in Challoner's own book, besides being repeated and insisted on again and again elsewhere. The all-pervading subject of the Love of God is pure St. Francis, even to the very turns of expression. In the medita-



tion on the "Two Standards," here called "On fighting under the standard of Jesus Christ" (18th February), and in many other places we meet with traces of St. Ignatius; but the method of the *Spiritual Exercises* as a whole is not followed, and they were drawn upon less than might have been expected. Challoner's known devotion to St. Francis of Sales, his choice of the Saint's festival for his consecration day, his translation of the *Introduction to a Devout Life*, all support the intrinsic testimony of the *Meditations*, that the influence of that Saint's life and teaching was very great in his own spiritual development, and so far as Challoner is to be ascribed to a given school, he must without hesitation be classed in the school of St. Francis of Sales.

The history of the *Meditations for Every Day in the Year*, subsequent to publication, shows how well the bishop had succeeded in his design. The book became a household work in Catholic homes throughout Great Britain, and was largely used in Ireland. It was often reprinted in both countries, and has been translated into Italian and French. The late Bishop of Portsmouth, Dr. Vertue, issued a revised text in 1879, in which he modified the phraseology and punctuation in some respects so as to make it more suitable for modern readers, and this edition is that now commonly used.

Nor is it only among Catholics that the *Meditations* have been known and valued. In his life of Keble, Lord Coleridge writes: "In later years I believe he has made more use of books of devotion, Bishop Wilson, Jeremy Taylor and Challoner. This last was always a great favourite with him."<sup>1</sup>

It may be that the class of old-fashioned Catholics who made their daily meditation year by year out of "Challoner" has altogether passed away, and that in the multitude of meditations now available the old book with its solidity and earnestness is in some danger of passing into oblivion, but the past cannot be undone, and during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there were many good Catholics who found in the *Meditations* and the *Garden of the Soul* the chief sources of their devotion. By means of these two books the bishop has continued long after death his favourite task of preaching the love of God to men, and through them he has gathered

<sup>1</sup> Fourth edition, p. 588.

many souls to Christ. Of his countless activities none have been more fruitful in results than these works, coming as they did from one who passed his own life in close and intimate union with God.

As in this chapter we have been led to consider the spirituality of Bishop Challoner, it will not be unsuitable here to add something as to his method of spiritual direction. Fortunately this can be supplied in his own words, for there still exist three letters, one on prayer, one on aridity and one on vocation to the Religious life, from which his manner of dealing with souls may be understood. It will be seen that once the soul could bring itself to make the full sacrifices demanded by God, he was all for holy liberty and a spirit of joy. The first letter is in itself a miniature treatise on prayer, blending practical wisdom and tenderness, as the Saints know how to do, when they speak of the hidden things of Divine Love.<sup>1</sup>

"TO SR M. A. M—E BR.

"July 7, 1755.

"Distance of place and other circumstances will scarce allow of a regular direction, such as you might perhaps be desirous of; but as to giving you briefly my thoughts from time to time, in answer to such queries, as you may propose to me, relating to the conduct of your soul; I am willing to acquiesce to your desires; in hopes of procuring by that means a larger share in your prayers, that I may begin to love God myself, and not be reproached one day with pretending to teach others, what I have never learnt.—

"By yours I find you have very great obligations to our Lord for having taken out of your heart the love of the world and its cheating vanities, and sweetly called you to the desire, at least, of being a perpetual servant, and faithful spouse of divine love. Oh, how far were you from deserving this favour! Oh how unhappy shall you be, if you don't labour with all your might to correspond with this grace by a total consecration of

<sup>1</sup> The original drafts of these letters are in the Letter-Book, fos. 38, 41 and 45, the second being followed by "A Meditation for the anniversary day of a religious profession". Though they are evidently addressed to a nun, Dr. Kirk in making his transcripts of Challoner's spiritual letters read "Sr M. A. M—e, Br" as "Sir M. A. M—e, Bart". The "Br." probably indicates Bruges or Brussels, in which towns there were then four communities of English nuns.

all the affections of your heart, and of all the powers of your soul to this heavenly spouse! Where more is given, more is required. The love of God must be, then, the great business of your life, and of your prayer; and not any kind of love, but a fervent and perfect love. The school of this love is mental prayer. The master is our Lord himself and his holy spirit in your interior. As for time and place, you may exercise yourself in it, at all times, in all places and employments; as you have this great master always near you, even in the very centre of your soul, with both his eye and his heart always upon you. S. Teresa prescribes for the regular time of mental prayer, for all that aspire after divine love, at least two hours every day: she herself took many more. But (as I said,) love which is the life of prayer, ought not to be confined to the narrow limits of these two hours; but ought to season and sanctify all our other exercises and ordinary employments, by the help of a spirit of recollection and remembrance of the presence of God, and frequent aspirations to Him.—These acts and aspirations of love both in prayer and out of prayer, may be exercised many ways and in many shapes; as by acts of adoration, praise and glory, like the Angels who are always singing to God: Holy, &c.;—by frequent oblations of our whole being for time and eternity to Him;—by begging of Him to teach us to love;—by rejoicing in Him; by desiring and praying for the sanctification of His name; the propagation of His kingdom; the execution of His will;—by grieving to see Him so much offended &c.—This structure of divine love, which it must be your main business to raise, since it is this that is to bring you to that eternal love which is the essential beatitude of heaven, cannot stand without its proper foundation of self-knowledge and humility; and labouring to bring under that unhappy self-love (with all its branches) which is the capital enemy of the love of God. Hence the two great helps both for prayer and love, are humility and mortification. And therefore all that aspire after divine love must not lose the sight of these two virtues without which it wd be in vain to expect to make any progress in the school of that blessed love. These things being premised, to come to the particulars of your letter: I have nothing to object to your manner of prayer: follow your attraction, don't make yourself a slave to particular methods, and

rules to the prejudice of true liberty of spirit which enables you to follow God without constraint: dilate your soul as much as you can in the affective way: let the love of God in one shape or other, and the confession of your disloyalties and sins at the feet of Christ be the daily food of your soul. But don't neglect to make the Passion of our Lord the frequent subject also of your meditations, and fix yourself like Magdalene at his feet.

"As to dryness and other difficulties and crosses, which you meet with in your prayers, don't be discouraged at them. The cross in some shape or other always attends the true servants of Christ crucified. On these occasions exercise yourself in humility, patience, resignation, embracing and loving the will of God, even in his scourges. Here you may exercise a love the more pure, because less mixed with that self-seeking which may often be apprehended in the times of joy and comfort, in which we are too apt to love the consolations of God more than the God of all consolation; the gift more than the Giver.

"As to your vocal prayers, I don't like your spending so much time in them by straining in that laborious manner your thoughts, or by the repetitions you speak of.—The best kind of attention in prayer is that which fixes the soul in God, rather than that which is solicitous about the words or the meaning of the words: because that attention to God brings the soul sooner to the love of God, which is the end of all prayer. The attention that I would recommend to you is that of the heart, that is of the will, rather than that of the brain, that is of the thought and the imagination. The distractions of the unruly fancy and imagination shall never hurt you provided your heart and will have no share in them.—

"As to the languor and stupidity you speak of, if you know of any part, that your will has in it, or any sacrifice that God calls for at your hands, which you are not disposed to offer Him you must remove the cause by renouncing all that may deprive you of the sweet familiarity of your divine lover. But if you find no such cause in yourself, make what advantage you can of this cross in the manner I said before with regard to spiritual dryness.

"As to your motions of impatience they may serve to humble you and to give you daily occasions of little victo-

ries over yourself. I hope they will not be able to do you any great damage.

"I shall add nothing else, only remind you of keeping as close as you can to Jesus Christ crucified, and uniting all your performances with his."

The next letter deals with aridity and distraction in prayer and the manner in which we should pray for others.

"TO SR M. A. M——RE BR.

"If our Lord instead of the milk of consolations affords you the more solid food of conformity to his blessed will under the cross, together with strong desires of loving and serving him in spirit and truth, and adhering to him no less upon Calvary than upon Thabor, you have no reason to repine at the choice He has made for you. It was the portion He chose for Himself, and has allotted to His greatest favourites. As to these aridities and distractions you speak of, they may serve to let you know yourself, and show you how little you can do, if our Lord withdraw himself or hide his face: they may serve to humble you and [cause you] to think that you are not worthy of being treated otherwise &c.—They may also give you occasion to look well into yourself, and see if there be no sacrifice that God calls for at your hands, that you refuse Him; or any affection to which you allow a place in your heart that divides any part of it from Him, and is thereby a source of distractions. But if you can discover nothing of this, your distractions cannot hurt you, because they only reach the imagination and the brain, but no ways touch the will and the heart, which remains united to God, in the midst of these involuntary roving of the head.—I like your continuing your prayer for an hour at one time, better than your dividing it.—As to your little indispositions of faintness or sickness, I believe your heavenly spouse who sees your heart will not be displeased with the little solace you allow yourself in the things you mention, especially as you do it for Him, and that the poor body may be better able to serve the spirit, and not hinder it in following Him.—As for greater sicknesses if our Lord sends them, He will also send you with them the grace to profit by them and not let them separate you from Him. As to praying for our neighbours more particularly, tis a branch of that charity



which we owe to all in general, and to some in a more particular manner. To recommend the necessities of these to God, either at the end of one's prayers or at other times, daily, I should think very advisable, though not so as to be scrupulous to repeat a catalogue of them. As also I earnestly recommend to you to be very importunate with Our Lord, for the souls of our poor Country, and so many millions of others going astray by error and vice. (S. Teresa.) A general recommendation of all such as desire your prayers, may entitle you to say with truth you have prayed for them.—As to your office, if the scrupulous attention to the pronouncing of the words hinders the attention to better things, it is visible that you are to lay aside by the will of God, that which hinders His love."

Finally, we have a letter on religious vocation, which has not come down to us quite complete, though only the actual conclusion seems to be missing.

TO SR M. W. BR.

"Jan. 1756.

"It is not always an easy matter to judge whether an inclination to Religion be a call from God or no. If God be not the motive, but something else that is merely temporal, or selfish, or a complaisance to worldly friends, or the like, tis plain the call is not from God. But I cannot say the same with relation to the wholesome fear of losing God in the midst of the dangers of the world; for here God seems to be the motive; and this is one of the ways, by which God often calls souls to himself. But then to conclude a vocation is from God, it is not enough to find that the present motive is good, if one has reason to apprehend that this inclination to Religion is but a passing disposition which is not like to be lasting and steady: as also if necessary strength or health be wanting: and therefore in all cases the matter ought to be well recommended to God, and good counsel to be taken before a person comes to a resolution in a thing of so great importance.

"As to young people who have an inclination to Religion, their motives ought to be thoroughly examined, setting aside in this examination all things else but God: and if it appears that God really calls them, I should not advise the putting

them to the fiery trial of sending them back for a while into the Babylonian furnace of the world. Some indeed may have strength enough to stand this trial: others may be exposed thereby to lose a real vocation, and to perish in the flames.

“The great point I could wish to be inculcated to all who aspire to religion, is the necessity that they should be made thoroughly sensible of the great obligations of that station, and that they consider well whether they have wherewithall to build that tower at the charges of giving up themselves and all things else without reserve to God; lest otherwise instead of leaving the world to enter into Religion, they carry the world along with them into Religion, with evident danger to themselves, if not to their companions also, by communicating to them the maxims and spirit of the world. All that are piously inclined are not called to religion; some are designed by his divine Majesty, who alone has the disposal of all offices in his family to serve him in another station, & to live in the world the life of good Christian Matrons, for the benefit of many. Such as these are to be left to follow God &c.—My best wishes and blessing to Sr M.—Your exercises of charity and patience may be made an excellent prayer keeping close in the mean time in your interiour to Jesus Christ and uniting your performances with His. Our Lord once said to S.T. (St. Teresa)” [here the MS. breaks off].

These letters are probably only typical of many which he wrote to those who sought his counsel and direction. Probably many such lie hidden away in old Catholic houses while many more will have perished. It may be that some among our older religious communities may possess among their ancient papers letters written by him on the religious life. If this is so and such letters could be collected, they could not fail to throw fresh light on that deep and living, if hidden, devotion, with which our Catholic forefathers in those dreary times continued to serve God.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### FIVE QUIET YEARS.

1754-58.

THE year 1753, which had proved a notable date in the history of the Church in England, was followed by an uneventful period of five years, which has been passed over in almost unbroken silence by the bishop's biographers. Nor do the Diocesan Archives tell us much more, such fitful light as they afford chiefly indicating a continuance of steady routine work. That the more settled state of affairs introduced by the decree *Apostolicum ministerium* was immediately taken advantage of by Dr. Challoner for placing several diocesan matters on a more satisfactory footing, has been recorded by Milner, though the details he gives are but scanty :—<sup>1</sup>

“Our prelate being now armed with fresh authority, and animated with new zeal, began, at this time, to arrange the whole economy of the district, and to provide for its spiritual wants and improvements in a more effectual manner than had hitherto been done, distributing his clergy in the situations and places where there was the greatest prospect of doing good, and founding new establishments as far as his circumstances would permit, for the same purpose ; but above all, taking the most effectual care that they should acquit themselves of their obligation of dispensing the word of God by catechising the children and instructing the ignorant. Being convinced, however, that the chief success of his pious plans depended upon the clergy's being possessed of the true spirit of their vocation, it is incredible what pains he took to inspire them with the same, both in his private instructions and in his public conferences.”

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, p. 25.

Though Milner here speaks of Challoner's conferences to his clergy, we know from Barnard that as a fact these gatherings had at this time been suspended for prudential motives, and were not resumed until 1759 or 1760.<sup>1</sup>

One of the immediate results of the decree of 1753 was to draw the attention of the authorities in Rome to the complaints that had been frequently made about the character of the students who were received at the English College there, and ordained for the English mission. The bishops felt that as long as they were not consulted on the selection of candidates, they would continue to be liable to be saddled with unsuitable and often undesirable missionaries. Dr. Challoner seized the opportunity offered by this more favourable condition of things to select from his district three youths, and to despatch them to the English College, at the same time intimating that the vicars apostolic of both Midland and Northern Districts were about to do the same. That this action was approved of at Rome is seen in the following letter, written by Dr. Challoner to Bishop Stonor, on the 15th of January, 1754:—

“HOND. SIR

“Last night I received a letter from Dr. Kit at Hil-ton<sup>2</sup> in which he writes thus: ‘The news of your having procured three young men for this place gave great satisfaction. You seem to promise a like supply from my unkle and Mr. Petre of the North, which was much wanted; but the former, I find, has miscarried at least of this season &c.’ The grounds I had of giving them hopes of the like supply from your division is what you told me when here in town of your dispositions in that regard. I find they are very desirous there that we should have the choosing of the youths that are to be educated in that house: and certainly ’tis more desirable, and much more likely to answer the end of the institution to have hopeful youths of our choosing, than to be forced to take up with the *quisquilie* or leavings of other people. For my part, I am so much convinced of the importance of our embracing this opportunity of fixing the choice of the subjects to be sent

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. II., p. 9, for a description of these Conferences.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Christopher Stonor at Rome.

thither in the BBs [Bishops] here : that if you have none proper to recommend at present, though I have sent three already (who are there before this) all very hopeful, and not without some charges out of my own pocket ; I shall look out for three more to send away this Spring. The first charges will be all, and not very large, considering ten years' education or more which they are to have free cost. For this end I write this post to Lancashire to inquire what youths may be had from thence. They should be at least fourteen years old, and know the first rudiments of Latin.

"How goes your school<sup>1</sup> on? I was thinking if you want a p[riest] to be master there, that Mr. Sharife, now at Douay, (whose health will not allow him to live in town) if he will accept of it, might not do amiss. Wishing you a happy new year,

"I am, Hond. Sir,

"Ever yours in Christ

"J. FISHER.

"Jan. 15, 1754."

The literary work which occupied him at this time was a collection of the lives of the Fathers of the Desert. Its full title was *The Wonders of God in the Wilderness, or the Lives of the most celebrated Saints of the Oriental Deserts; faithfully collected out of the genuine works of the holy Fathers and other ecclesiastical Writers*. His reason for compiling this book he explains in the preface, where he points out that the greatest ecclesiastical writers have written the lives of these ascetic hermit-saints, and that their story has borne fruit in every age of the Church. The bishop claims that his book is the first attempt in the English language to give an account of the lives and maxims of these ancient fathers. In the method of treatment selected, he follows his usual practice of translating and summarising existing works,—in this case the oldest lives he could find. To each of the twenty-eight lives he prefixes a note indicating the sources, and from these notes

<sup>1</sup> The school here referred to is something of a mystery. It could not be the establishment at Edgbaston, which was then conducted by Franciscans. Possibly it was the school founded by Mr. Palin at Rowney Wood, near Beoley, Worcestershire, but this is mere conjecture. Sedgley Park was not founded till some years later.



it seems clear that he was working direct from the earlier volumes of the *Acta Sanctorum* of the Bollandists. It seems strange that with his restricted resources he should have had access to so large and so costly a collection; but we know not only from this book, but from his *Britannia Sancta*, that he was able to consult the folios of the Bollandists when he so wished. The book, somewhat dingy now, was well produced for its time, and has quite a good and well-engraved map as a frontispiece. Needham was the publisher. This first edition, which appeared in 1755, was followed by others in 1804 and 1806, while an American edition was published in New York as late as 1852.

About this time another question affecting the relations between seculars and regulars arose and led to more troubles, though of a less violent nature. This was the point known as the "Sexennium," of which mention was made in describing Benedict XIV.'s rules for the English Mission. By these rules, it will be remembered, every regular was commanded once every six years to retire to a house of his own order for three months, during which time he was to make a retreat lasting fifteen days. From the first this particular regulation had caused great dissatisfaction among the members of the religious orders and other communities. Writing within a few months of the publication of the decree, Father Rookwood Gage, a Jesuit at Bury, expressed his annoyance very bitterly, and attributed the regulation to the ill-will of the secular clergy, seeing therein evidence of a secular plot to ruin the religious orders.<sup>1</sup>

"What else," he writes to his kinsman, Sir William Gage, "can mean their partial scheme of procuring regulars to be sent abroad for three months every 6 years, but to engross their places, after tiring them out with large expenses, and the family with the want of due assistance during the time of their banishment? Do seculars who are bound by fewer vows from worldly vanities stand in less need of renewing their spirit? Or does their not being obliged to the rule of poverty cause them to squander so much on secular affairs as not to be able to pay their residence at a college for 3 months as well as a

<sup>1</sup> Letter quoted in a letter from Alban Butler to Bishop Hornyold, 23rd Dec., 1753, Westminster Archives, 1751-55.

regular? But to excuse all absurdities, I am willing to suppose these Gentlemen design to put themselves upon the same footing as those regulars who have no houses to go to, and so leave the mission and all pastoral functions to those who have been at pain and expense of travelling abroad to shake off the worldly dust, which having already much weakened, must in time quite put out the eyes of those who have not the opportunity of doing the same, &c."

Such suggestions as these could only have been made in the heat of the moment, and the little outburst would not be worth recalling, except that it shows the sort of talk that was taking place, and the irritation caused by this part of the decree. And, indeed, apart from imaginary secular plots, there were enough points of hardship and inconvenience in this part of the decree to render it extremely difficult for the regulars to give full effect to it.

These hardships were all summed up in a petition which the President General of the English Benedictines drew up on the subject and sent to Rome. He pointed out the practical difficulty that would immediately arise on its being put into practice. Estimating the total number of missionaries of all the various orders in England at about three hundred, he calculated that every year about fifty of them would be withdrawn from the work of the mission for three months and more, in some cases even for six months, owing to the distance to be traversed. Yet owing to the scattered nature of the missions it would usually be quite impossible for even the nearest priest to do their duty; and thus fifty or more congregations would be left without a priest for months at a time. The Catholic nobility and gentry, too, who supported chapels, would be loath to lose the services of their chaplains and confessors. Yet their places could only be supplied by depriving some other congregation of its pastor. The petition also urged the prejudice which might be created among non-Catholics by these frequent comings and goings beyond seas.

Besides these drawbacks, there was the financial burden thrown upon the various orders. The expenses of the journey would be great. The priest would have to be supported for the time of his travels besides the three months spent in his monastery; not to mention the necessary cost of the religious

habit. All this is roughly estimated at 250 scudi,<sup>1</sup> a sum far in excess of the resources of the missionaries themselves, or of their communities. Considering that the average income of each missionary for his support and his works of charity was usually about 40 scudi a year, it would appear that this sexennial journey would cost each one more than his income for the whole six years. To take the case of the Benedictines themselves, if twenty missionaries fulfilled this obligation every year, this would involve a total outlay of 5,000 scudi, so that they would either not in future be able to send so many missionaries as before, or they would shortly be ruined outright. The petition concluded by begging for a revocation of this part of the rules.

Naturally there is more in some of these points than in others, but leaving out of account some of the weaker and more fanciful reasons alleged for the revocation, there remains an undeniably strong case.

The decision arrived at was communicated to the vicars apostolic by a decree dated the 5th of July, 1755. The Holy See adhered to the substance of the regulation; but, while refusing to recall it in its entirety, extended the time by a further period of six years, subject to conditions described by Dr. Challoner in a letter to Philip Carteret, the superior of the Jesuits in London:—<sup>2</sup>

“SIR

“I am directed by Mr. White [Bishop Petre] to send you this copy of the orders he has lately received from Mr. Abraham [the Pope], that you may communicate the contents to your brethren who are employed in this district. You will see hereby, first, that application having been made for a recalling that part of the late rules which regards the going abroad after every six years, the Holy See has not thought proper to depart from what was before decreed. 2. That, however, in consideration of the great inconvenience it would be for all the regular Missioners to withdraw from the mission, within the four years that remain to the conclusion of the first sexennium, from the date of the decree, which will be May 30,

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Challoner in his accounts always reckons four scudi to the pound sterling.

<sup>2</sup> Archives of English Prov. S.J., “Bishops,” vol. i.

1759, His Holiness allows another sexennium which will end May 30, 1765, and obliges all the Regulars without exception to comply with the tenour of the decree before the expiration of that term. 3. In the meantime His Holiness does not intend that the faculties already granted by the VV. Ap. to the Regulars should be understood to be prorogued beyond the first sexennium ; but empowers the said VV. Ap. to impart the like faculties from year to year during the course of the second sexennium. As Mr. White is desired by Mr. Abraham to make known all these particulars to as many of the regulars as serve in his district, he depends upon your concurrence with the intentions of that gentleman by acquainting all your subjects with them. I am,

“Sr.

“Your humble servant in Christ

“RICHARD DEBORN.

“October 6, 1755.”

It may be worth noting in connection with this letter that Catholics were growing a little careless with regard to their code-words. Thus, in this letter, though the Pope is twice called “Mr. Abraham,” yet he is openly alluded to as “His Holiness” and there is explicit mention of the Holy See. The observance of the code probably depended on the mood of the writer, as in later letters we find the bishop writing in the most guarded manner and observing the conventional code most strictly.

So far as the sexennium was concerned, the matter rested for the present on this footing: the time for making the retreat was extended till the 30th of May, 1765 ; while the grant of faculties remained good until the 30th of May, 1759, after which date they would require yearly renewal.

As a settlement of the difficulty, this arrangement could not possibly be satisfactory to the regulars, and it did not conduce to the speedy restoration of cordial relations between them and the vicars apostolic. About the same time there are other traces which show that these relations were still strained. It will have been noticed that during the long struggle that preceded the publication of the decree, the three secular vicars apostolic had to act without the concurrence of the



Vicar Apostolic of the Western District, Bishop Prichard, who as a regular was not disposed to assist his brethren in the episcopate against his brethren in religion. He was now dead, and had been succeeded by his coadjutor, Bishop York. The latter now petitioned in turn for a coadjutor on the ground of advancing years. Naturally such coadjutor would be sought among the regulars, because the Western District ever since its creation in 1688 had been held either by a Benedictine or a Franciscan. Considering that before the Reformation nine or ten of the cathedrals were served by regular chapters, there was a certain fitness in one of the districts being assigned to the regular clergy. This idea was in fact recognised at the time of the Restoration of the Hierarchy in 1850, when the diocese of Newport and Menevia was made a Benedictine diocese, with a monastic chapter of Benedictine monks. But there was no kind of law on the subject, nor even a definite understanding, as was shown in 1705, when Dr. Andrew Giffard, a secular priest, was appointed to the Western Vicariate, with the title of Bishop of Centuriæ. When he refused the appointment, another secular, Gerard Saltmarsh, was elected in his stead. As a fact he was never consecrated, owing to his briefs being suspended in consequence of charges of Jansenism made against him. However, the successive election of two seculars, even if not actually carried into effect, showed that the district was not in the hands of regulars as of right, though every succeeding Vicar Apostolic of the Western District down to 1840 was, as we have said, chosen either from the Benedictine or Franciscan Orders. In 1755 the other vicars apostolic had serious thoughts of trying to put an end to this. Bishop Prichard's failure to co-operate with them had been an object-lesson in the trouble likely to be caused by any want of solidarity in the Episcopate. Their opportunity came when Bishop York petitioned Rome for a coadjutor. Cardinal Spinelli, Prefect of Propaganda, wrote to each of them on the 16th of August, 1755, asking them to nominate two seculars and two regulars from whom the new bishop might be chosen.

Bishop Stonor, always ready to take the lead, suggested that they should decline to nominate any regular, and press for the appointment of a secular. This suggestion was dis-



cussed by Bishop Petre and his coadjutor, and met with their approval, as the latter signified in a letter dated 7th October, 1755 :—

“ HOND. SIR,

“ The letters we lately received were not the autographa (which Dr. Green<sup>1</sup> has in his hands) but authentick copies sent over by that gentleman. That about the Sexennium is word for word the same as that of Amorien.<sup>2</sup> Whether this, our brother, has had one about the affair of the Coadjr. I cannot tell; but have sent you on the other side a copy of Mr. White's, to which I believe yours must be perfectly conformable.

“ Mr. White is entirely of your mind as to declining the recommending of any of the Reg[ulars] for the reason you alledge. And as to Sec[ulars] he likes the persons you speak of; only he is more inclined to name Alban Butler (whom he thinks the gentry of that part of the world would be more taken with) than Mr. Walton. But why might not Dr. Charles Howard, all things considered, be as proper as either? If the choice should fall upon your nephew, I know not what we should do for one to succeed him in his present station, in which he does us signal service.

“ We have begun to send to the superiors of the reg. copies of the letter that regards the sexennium, with a letter from ourselves to each one of them taking notice of the principal contents, and desiring that they should concur with the intentions of Mr. Abraham by making them known to their respective subjects.

“ I am, Hond. Sir,

“ Your most obedient humble servant

“ J. FISHER.

“ Oct. 7, 1755.”

Dr. York himself urged the appointment of one of his Benedictine brethren, Dr. Charles Walmesley, a young man thirty-five years old, of good birth, handsome presence, and unusual ability, particularly in Natural Science and Mathematics. He had taken his Doctorate in the University of Paris, had

<sup>1</sup> President of Douay.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Petre, V.A. Northern District.



BISHOP WALMESLEY, O.S.B.



served as Prior in the Benedictine house there at the early age of twenty-seven, and had since been at Rome as Procurator General of his Order. He had already published papers on Astronomy, and a Mathematical work<sup>1</sup> which had aroused attention. His studies had confirmed Newton's theory of the moon, and his reputation was so deservedly high that, though a Catholic priest, he was consulted by the British Government on the alteration of the style which was carried into effect in 1753.

These qualities, together with his piety and regularity as a monk, marked him out as a man of unusual promise. The other bishops put forward three names, Dr. Christopher Stonor, their agent at Rome, Dr. Charles Howard, and the Hon. and Rev. James Talbot, though the last-named was not yet thirty years of age. Bishop Petre's suggestion of Alban Butler had evidently not found favour in the eyes of Bishop Stonor, who had not a good opinion of him, as Alban Butler himself testifies.<sup>2</sup>

In the event the brilliant talents and solid qualities of Dr. Walmesley prevailed, and he was consecrated by Cardinal Lanti, the Cardinal Protector of England, in the English College at Rome, on the 21st of December, 1756. In after years he became a tried friend and counsellor of Bishop Challoner, who trusted his wisdom and admired his holiness.

As this distinguished bishop came on the scene, another passed away. In 1756 the indomitable old Vicar Apostolic of the Midland District, having laboured to the last, died at Stonor Park, the ancestral home of his family. He was seventy-eight years old, and had been bishop forty years. His long experience and natural force of character had well fitted him to take a leading place among Catholics, and after Bishop Giffard's death he had taken the initiative among the bishops whenever there was need for joint action. Though not the senior vicar apostolic, for Bishop Prichard had been consecrated before him, he had, owing to the latter's isolation, led the others. Bishop Petre's retiring disposition, and Dr. Challoner's self-effacement, resulted in their gladly accepting the lead that his indepen-

<sup>1</sup> *Analyse des Mésures des Rapports et des Angles; ou Réduction des Intégrales aux Logarithmes et aux Arcs de Circle*, Paris, 1753.

<sup>2</sup> Letter, Alban Butler to Dr. Hornyold, 14th Aug., 1753, Westminster Archives, 1751-55.

dence was always ready to afford, so that for twenty years he exercised the preponderating influence in the episcopal counsels. Through the long struggle with the Regulars, he had consistently played the foremost part, and he it was who was mainly instrumental in obtaining the decree of 1753.<sup>1</sup>

But he had felt the weight of his years, and in 1751 he had written to Propaganda offering to resign his vicariate on the ground that he could no longer make his visitations, either on horseback or in carriage. Propaganda refused to accept his resignation, but gave him a coadjutor in his friend Dr. Hornyold, a somewhat retiring prelate, of undoubted ability, but without the same masterful character; yet one whose gentleness served in some way to mitigate the imperiousness of the somewhat autocratic old bishop. Dr. Stonor, with his English blue blood, and his French title, "Abbas et Baro de Jard," remained to the end an aristocrat of the old school. In his formal missives to Rome, "ex castello Stonorio," and even in his friendly sagacious letters to Dr. Challoner, there is always something that reveals the personality of one who felt he belonged by right to the governing classes. In his later years he was sometimes accused of writing or saying hard things, or of acting in dictatorial manner; but no one ever questioned his sterling honesty or integrity. With his death a notable and impressive figure passes from our history.

About this time we are given a brief glimpse of Bishop Challoner's personal work in London, by Milner, who, speaking of the Charitable Society, "of which he was the founder and regular preacher," states,<sup>2</sup> "In general he left the more

<sup>1</sup> See Milner, *Life of Bishop Hornyold*, Laity's Directory, 1818; also, Mazière Brady, *Annals of the Catholic Hierarchy* (Rome, 1877), p. 207.

<sup>2</sup> Milner, *Life*, p. 36. This was probably the "Benevolent Society for the relief of the Aged and Infirm Poor," which still exists. The "Aged Poor Society," which also continues its good work, was founded in 1708, so could not be the Society to which Milner here refers. But the bishop showed his interest in the Aged Poor Society by attending the dinners which were held to promote its objects. On this point Charles Butler says: "Of the 'Compotations and Comessations' mentioned by the Apostle, he strongly disapproved; and strongly dissuaded his clergy from attending them. But he sometimes attended dinners for effecting purposes of charity. It will show the difference of times and manners, to mention, that the dinner to promote 'the relief of the aged poor' took place on the Feast of St. John the Baptist at a house a little way out of London: one shilling and sixpence was the reckoning of each person, and the party returned to town in time for Vespers" (*Life of Challoner*, p. 656).



splendid audiences to other preachers, and chose, for his own part, to preach to the poor and to persons in the middle rank of life, where there was less temptation of vanity for himself, and a more ample harvest to be reaped of his neighbours' souls. As far back as the writer's recollection can trace the ministry of this holy prelate, about the year 1756 and 1757, the times being troublesome and privacy necessary, he was accustomed to hold his pious assembly and preach, every Sunday evening, at a miserable and ruinous apartment hired for this purpose near Clare Market. Hence they removed to another, almost as wretched, amongst the stables in Whetstone's Park, Gate Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, and lastly, after the Bishop had preached for a few weeks in the Sardinian Chapel, until he was silenced by the Ambassador at the instance of Ministry, the said society removed to a place rather more commodious in Turnstyle, Holborn. This society consisted of certain reputable tradesmen, whose first object was to defray the hire and other expenses of the large apartment, in which they assembled to hear their pastor's sermons, and which was regularly filled by a great multitude of the poorer sort of Catholics, together with themselves. In the second place, by means of stated and regular contributions, they formed a fund for relieving the sick who were in indigent circumstances, as likewise poor widows, neglected orphans, or reduced families, which came within their own knowledge or were recommended to them. Having listened to their Bishop's holy instructions and exhortations, and the rest of the audience being withdrawn, they then deliberated on the most effectual ways of affording assistance in such cases, as far as their stock would admit of."

By 1757 Bishop Challoner had another work ready for publication. This was an abridgment of Abraham Woodhead's *Life of St. Teresa*. The Saint of mental prayer made strong appeal to him, and the influence of her teaching is apparent in his own *Meditations*. That fascinating book, her own life written by herself—twin volume to the *Confessions* of St. Augustine—had been translated by Woodhead in a handsome edition, published in 1669-71, now grown scarce and obsolete. The bishop, with his usual desire to place the treasures of the Church within the reach of all his people, now did for the

*Life of St. Teresa* what he had previously done in the *Confessions of St. Augustine*. The subject matter, and not the form, was the object of his care. He was in no way concerned to produce a critical edition. What he aimed at was a practical abridgment in a compass and form that his people could procure and would read. So taking the old translation, he abbreviated and modernised until he had the pith of Woodhead's three volumes ready for publication in one. The book, like its predecessor, was published by Needham of Holborn.

At the same time he brought out an enlarged edition of his *Garden of the Soul*, of which as many as six editions had now been exhausted. The success this prayer-book met with undoubtedly did much to make the bishop known and revered by the Catholics of his age, and far beyond the limits of his own district. Adopted as it was by English Catholics at large, it extended his influence, making him the spiritual father to them all, a true "leader in Israel".

About this time his health began to fail, and from time to time we hear of more or less serious illnesses. The first intimation of breaking health is in a letter to Dr. Christopher Stonor, dated the 14th of July, 1757, in which he says: "I am at present in the country for the benefit of the air, having been for some time pretty much out of order with colds and coughs and shortness of breath; but I am now, thank God, on the mending hand".<sup>1</sup>

On the 3rd of May, 1758, the great Pope Benedict XIV. died, his successor being Cardinal Rezzonico, who took the name Clement XIII. As soon as the result of the conclave was known in London, Bishop Challoner composed a letter of congratulation to the new Pope in the names of Bishop Petre and himself. The congratulations of the English Catholics are compared to the widow's mite, but, though humble, they are offered with great devotion. The benefits conferred by the late Pope are briefly touched upon, and the new Pontiff is welcomed as the heir, not only of his See, but also of his virtues. The good-will of the Holy Father is sought for the scanty remains of what was once a flourishing portion of our Lord's flock, and in conclusion the Apostolic Benediction is

<sup>1</sup> Westminster Archives, *Epp. Var.*, xiii., 149.

asked. The letter was dated London, 1st August, and received in due time a gracious reply.

The form of the document, which was evidently well considered, proved a very useful one, for in later years we find the bishop employing it again for the letters of similar import which he had to address to the next two Popes (Clement XIV. in 1769 and Pius VI. in 1775). In each case he slightly varied the body of the letter, but the beginning and end are word for word the same.

Towards the end of 1758 one of those incidents occurred to which Catholics under the penal laws were always liable, and which served to remind them that they still existed only on sufferance. There had been for more than thirty years a chapel in Lord Shrewsbury's house at Isleworth, or rather a room fitted up as a chapel, in which Mass was habitually offered. The house was at this time occupied by an Irish gentleman named O'Flaherty, and his chaplain was Mr. Richard Kendal, whom we have met with as head-master of the school at Standon Lordship. The Catholics in and around Isleworth had been on excellent terms with their neighbours, and no disturbance seemed likely, when the bigotry of one man set the law in motion against priest and chapel. At a vestry meeting held at Isleworth on the 17th of November, this person raised the question, and succeeded in carrying a resolution that the law should be enforced, and the necessary notices should be issued. Three days later, the parish solicitor, Mr. Parmenter, served notices on Mr. Kendal and on Mr. O'Flaherty, ordering the room used as a chapel to be closed, and the priest to leave the parish within one calendar month. The notice to Mr. Kendal is of sufficient interest to be given in full:—

“ TO MR. RICHARD KENDAL.

“ In pursuance of an Order and Resolution of the Parishioners of the Parish of Isleworth in the County of Middlesex made and taken at a Vestry held in and for the said parish on Friday the 17th day of this instant November, 1758, I hereby give you notice that unless you do remove and depart from the said parish of Isleworth and the neighbourhood thereof within one Calendar month from the date hereof, or if you afterwards return there again, the parishioners will prosecute,

and put the laws concerning Popery in execution against you without further notice.

“J. PARMENTER, Solr.

“for the parish of Isleworth afsd.

“INNER TEMPLE LANE,  
“20th Novembr. 1758.”

The aggrieved Catholics forthwith drew up a petition, asking for “advice and assistance to stay these prosecutions”. A draft of the petition is in the Diocesan Archives; but unfortunately there is nothing to show to whom it was addressed, or what was the sequel with regard to the mission.

But though the consequences of this petty persecution may not have been very serious, such incidents proved to Catholics how precarious was their position, even at a time when, as they stated in their petition, “the Government was leniently disposed, and the country generally tranquil”. It justified to the full their expressed view that it was “hard and uncalled for that it should be in the power of one or even a few individuals to raise the storm of persecution against them, especially without the least justifiable cause on their part”.

The year was now drawing to an end; yet its closing days had in store for Bishop Challoner a change which was to mark another epoch in his life. For eighteen years he had acted as coadjutor to Bishop Petre, and by undertaking the main burden of the work in London, and indeed throughout the vicariate, he had enabled the gentle and retiring old bishop to end his days in peace. His thoughtful affection was fully reciprocated by the older man. Charles Butler, speaking of Dr. Petre, says: “the present writer recollects his pious demeanour, his gentle manners, and the general remarks made at the time on the perfect cordiality which subsisted between him and his Coadjutor; the care which Doctor Petre took to bring forward Doctor Challoner to advantage; and the joy which he discovered on every occasion in which applause was given to Doctor Challoner, or where marks of esteem or veneration were shown to him”.<sup>1</sup>

The close of that humble and timorous life came just before Christmas, and on the 22nd of December, Bishop Petre's

<sup>1</sup> “Life,” *Cath. Mag.*, i., p. 659.

death made Dr. Challoner, by right of succession, Vicar Apostolic of the London District, thus making him in name what he had long been in fact. He was now sixty-eight years of age, and in failing health. The change indeed could mean but little additional labour to him, who had so long borne the brunt of the toil ; but there was the new sense of undivided responsibility laid upon his sensitive soul when he was physically unfit to bear it. Yet, unlikely as it would then have seemed to himself and his flock, he had to live and labour as vicar apostolic for more than twenty years before he, in his turn, could lay down the crozier which he had now to take from his dead predecessor.

END OF VOL. I.





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